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MEMOIRS  
OF  
HIS OWN LIFE,

BY  
TATE WILKINSON,  
*PATENTEE OF THE THEATRES-ROYAL, YORK & HULL.*

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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—IF I HAD HELD MY PEN BUT HALF AS WELL AS  
I HAVE HELD MY BOTTLE—WHAT A CHARMING  
HAND I SHOULD HAVE WROTE BY THIS TIME!

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VOL I.

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YORK:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,

By WILSON, SPENCE, and MAWMAN;

And sold by G. G. J. and J. ROBINSON, Paternoster-Row;  
and T. and J. EGERTON, Whitehall, London.

*Anno 1790.*





TO HIS GRACE THE  
DUKE OF NORFOLK.

---

MY LORD DUKE,

**T**O a patron of the Muses this would indeed be an intrusive and contemptible offering, as I cannot claim even the most distant relationship with the Sister Arts ; and if I were to assume only a familiar and easy acquaintance, I should be instantly detected as a silly, though *not* an *artful* impostor : I must therefore slide imperceptibly into your Grace's presence, under the fallacious and specious pretext of being a dangling twig-cousin of the alluring theatres, to which your Grace is a well-known avowed friend, *amateur*, and protector ; as they evidently are honoured with your Grace's never-failing tribute and support :—Therefore, under the guardian shades of Melpomene and Thalia, I am emboldened (*by Hope*) to cast my defenceless work at your Grace's feet, imploring mercy and pity for my lack of skill and non-acquaintance with the Muses. The work, indeed, is a true picture of its master, being as destitute of wit as wealth :—The concurring evils of

its poverty, and want of natural brilliant endowments, preclude, I fear, every possible chance of good fortune for preserving its life with the world's approbation, unless when they behold with wonder your Grace's condescension in raising the supplicating mendicant from the ground, and crowning its insignificance with your good wishes, which must be ever regarded as an honoured and gracious fostering. And who knows, by being thus adorned with the Duke of Norfolk's name in its front, but it may make so brilliant an appearance as to obtain a passport into the presence of the most noble and worthy, and by such unmerited good fortune, its sickly life may not only be preserved from instant perishing, but prolonged even after its insignificant parent shall inevitably be obliterated from the smallest traces of memory ; as your Grace's goodness, wit, and understanding, will live for ages, and perhaps occasionally be the means of restoring a faint glimmering (in theatrical dark passages) of him who, during his life, has ever been with true gratitude and respectful homage,

Your Grace's much honoured,

highly obliged, and obedient

humble servant,

YORK,  
OCTOBER 23. 1790. }

TATE WILKINSON.

# P R E F A C E.

---

GOOD READER,

**B**E kind, courteous, merciful, and forgiving; for how would you be, if *HE*, who is the top of judgment, should but judge you as you are? Oh! think on that, and mercy then will breathe within your lips like man new made.

This confused, motley, incoherent medley—this something, or this nothing of a work, was undertaken without any premeditation or note whatever, and finished heedlessly, during a severe, painful, and tedious illness, occasioned by a dreadful fractured leg—the time greatly interfered upon with the constant and unavoidable vexations, disappointments, and accidents, that will ever be the natural attendants on the conductor of a theatre; as the difficulty of pleasing before and behind the curtain *requires, at least, no common share of wit*: but as I was unable to move, and was ever addicted to the witching time of night, it helped to alleviate many distressed hours.

As to wit I profess it not, yet here and there it will start unexpectedly, as the quotations are so variously sprinkled, and either witness for or against me; but

I may surely be permitted to quote, as the ablest and most ingenious men do the same (no matter how elevated in rank and station) and are frequently heard by the Lords and Commons, and even at the learned bar on the most serious occasions; neither is the holy pulpit entirely exempt from this practice. The esteemed Samuel Whyte, Esq; of Dublin, remarks, that "every class of life has its pedants; those of a theatrical turn shew their predilection in their use of theatrical allusions and citations from plays on every occasion, happily exemplified in the character of the Apprentice; here the writer takes leave, once for all, to acknowledge, that he has studiously imitated the turn of expression, and adopted a favourite phrase from any passage alluded to in other writers, without particularizing it by any mark or intimation, deeming it superfluous to the learned reader, who needs no monitor to recognise an old acquaintance, and may be pleased to meet it in a novel and unexpected situation: To the less learned it would be empty parade, and disfigure the page to no end. Our most eminent poets have freely indulged themselves in this practice;—Pope especially;—but as he resorted to the ancients, and works not commonly known, it has not been generally noticed; and by most who have observed it, esteemed a beauty." As a stage chronologer, I



flatter myself this work (besides its authenticity) possesses stage materials, and many whimsical situations, that, in the hands of a Mr. Murphy, might have been so pleasingly dressed, as to have sustained the being viewed and examined :—But I fear, like Bayes, I have a knack of making myself not understood.—I mean it as a kind of register for all persons attached to the theatres, and who wish for information relative to the London and Dublin stages : It may relieve, an heavy hour on a rainy day ; and to theatrical professors I think I may recommend it, as containing as impartial and true an account of the progress of the principal events of playhouses as any book I can recollect on the subject ; and at the same time truly lament its thousand deficiencies, and improprieties, which, I am sensible, will be insuperable bars to its prosperity.

However, I wrap myself in one idea, which is, I think it will not, cannot be, on examination, more indifferently and contemptuously estimated, than all my friends, and even my foes combined, (I dare suppose) expect it to be ; and I as freely declare, on the perusal, it is better, with all its prolixity, than I ever expected it would or could be. But I must in its behalf request my readers to observe, as a strict truth, that the printers, to their incessant fatigue, can testify, there never has been *one regular sheet*, or

*a legible one*; and, though a strange assertion, it is *incontrovertibly true*: the incorrectness of what I had *scratched down from one corner to the other*, was not intelligible even to myself the day following, and therefore it was next to impossible to properly divine the meaning; consequently many passages and words have been misconstrued, and unavoidably retained and printed; and hence several of my *wife* observations and informations, from *absolute necessity*, have been entirely obliterated, or not properly inserted; frequently from my own splashings and alterations, as I so bewildered the printers, that they declared it incomprehensible and impossible to proceed;—that they never had such a job in their lives, and heartily prayed they never might have such another.—However, the press, after groaning, has produced to light the mishapen deformity. Indeed it may with propriety be observed as matter of surprise, all circumstances considered, that my truly good friend, (in the fullest sense of the word) Mr. WILSON, has accomplished a work in ten months, in spite of the several insurmountable obstacles; and striking impediments, which obstructed its ever gliding smoothly into the road of either credit or fame. All this considered will easily gain kind allowance why its delay need not be wondered at, and my lameness apologize for tardy steps; for

when I *first* printed the proposals, I had at that time only begun the toilsome task I had set myself; and though *brevity* is the first word, I fear *tautology* would with justice seize the eldership and right\*. But, notwithstanding its ricketty origin, be it known to all men, that there is a secret pride, which, however I would endeavour to conceal, will burst out when I perceive *four volumes* in print—By TATE WILKINSON. I reflect on it with astonishment, and look with wonder at my patience and perseverance, as *philosophy* and *steadiness*, I dare assert, rarely attend my hobbling morning or evening walks. Every one will readily admit the materials to be the genuine spinning from my own brain; and allow me, like Touchstone, to be contented with my own ill-favoured thing, which no one else will claim. I must observe, it has been a tedious collection from me—

\* The Tablet being an after-thought, rendered some repetition requisite, and several anecdotes are omitted there, as a reference to the first and second volumes will supply many deficiencies.—The reader will allow for the different dates I have mentioned when writing, and not allude to the year of perusal. For an account of Mrs. Baker, whose letters conclude Vol. IV. (See Vol. III. page 64.)—Mentioning London performers in a future publication, intitled “The Wandering Patentee,” is to be understood as meant not to extend beyond those who have favoured the York Theatre with their services, not to the performers at large, as that would be taking too great a liberty.

mory, not having a single note except the interspersed genuine letters and ancient play-bills, which have been preserved merely by accident (not design) from the ruins of time, and snatched from the blaze of hundreds \*. If my ability equalled my inclination, it would be as elegant and heartfelt an offering as real genius ever presented to a discerning public. Such as it is I submissively request their acceptance of it ; and, like good-willed Francis's pennyworth of sugar, can only lament it is not better.—Now earnestly wishing for more friends, without the need, and their every prosperity,

I am their highly indebted, much obliged,

and respectful humble servant, &c.

Y O R K,  
OCTOBER 23, 1790. }

TATE WILKINSON.

*N. B.* To Mr. SWALWELL I look on myself as much indebted, for the business could never have proceeded, but from his incessant exertions and indefatigable perseverance.

\* Except two printed play-bills, one of 1748, the other 1750, as inserted in the Memoirs, I am not possessed of one prior to 1733 ; all the others are actually from memory.



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# M E M O I R S

O F

## TATE WILKINSON.

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**B**REVITY is the soul of WIT.—I am sorry for my own sake, as well as for those who have the patience and good nature to peruse this motley work, to observe, that it will be dreadfully deficient in both these material articles.—However, that the reader may not be kept in suspense, and then complain that the *mountain*, after a *tedious labour*, has at length *brought forth only a mouse*, I will, without further ceremony, proceed.

I, *Tate Wilkinson*, whose various stage adventures and *sparrings* have been permitted, and favoured with acceptance, more or less, in almost every principal theatre in the three kingdoms, as Drury-Lane, Covent-Garden, Hay-Market,—Smock-Alley and Crow-Street, Dublin,—Bath, Edinburgh, Portsmouth, Winchester, Maidstone,

VOL. I.

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Birmingham, Chester, Bristol, Norwich, York, Shrewsbury, Richmond in Surry, Exeter, Glasgow, Newcastle, Leeds, Lynn, Pontefract, Halifax, Doncaster, Hull, Wakefield, &c.—am the son of the late Rev. Dr. John Wilkinson, who was educated at St. Bees in Cumberland, and finished his studies at the university of Oxford, and who suffered transportation under the well remembered Marriage Act in 1755. He was his Majesty's chaplain of the Savoy, also chaplain to his late Royal Highness Frederic Prince of Wales, rector of Coyty in the county of Glamorgan, and stipendary-curate of Wive in the county of Kent.—The late Lord Galway, with whom he was particularly acquainted, presented him with a gift, which yielded a right to open plaister-pits in the honour of Pontefract: The original grant was to Robert Monkton, late of Hoderoyde, in the county of York, father to the aforesaid Lord Galway: The right from the Duchy-office was in 1740.—Those plaister-pits were sold to a Mr. Jenkinson, near Ferrybridge; but how they turned out it never lay in my way to get information.—Grace Wilkinson, his wife, was daughter of William Tate, Esq; who was for many years one of the aldermen of the city of Carlisle, and often chosen mayor of that ancient corporation; for above forty years patent searcher of his Majesty's customs there and at the port of

Whitehaven—a gentleman of undoubted loyalty. The said Grace Wilkinson, when she intermarried with the Rev. John Wilkinson, brought him two thousand pounds, at that time judged a very genteel fortune.—Dr. Wilkinson's affairs having been for many years greatly embarrassed, not only hers, but all his own acquisitions were entirely exhausted to satisfy the demands of his own creditors, and those of others, for whom he had become indiscreetly engaged.

I, Tate Wilkinson, (son to the said John and Grace) was born October 27, 1739; and, by my father's sentence of transportation, was likely to have been irretrievably ruined. I was at that critical period at the age of seventeen—not brought up to any business or profession—of a very indifferent constitution—and neither mother nor son had the least independency.

Previous to this unfortunate event, my father and mother had been connected with the most leading families, and were universally acquainted in London; the consequence (most fortunately for myself, as will appear hereafter,) was, that from the intercourse of visiting they formed intimate connexions with several leading persons of the kingdom of Ireland, which was the foundation of the happiest future consequences to me, as will, in the narrative, be verified.—Several of these fa-

families every year resorted to London, where they ever found hospitality, and a cheerful welcome, at our mansion in the Savoy.—Amongst our various visitors were Lord and Lady Forbes, from the sister kingdom. They were so attached to my father and mother, as to be almost inseparable: That intimacy subsisted on so strong a basis, and formed so firm a friendship, that they used to call me their *own boy Tate*, and their *dear George's only particular friend*. They promised to fix me genteelly in life; and were certain, if George lived to be Earl of Granard, *Tate* would be well provided for.—Airy castles too often gain belief and dependence, when of a sudden they disappear, and wake the deluded dreamer from his transitory vision, and in lieu present a true mirror, in which he views his actual state.—Not that I mean these promises in all probability would not have been performed, but the wheel of Fate is so uncertain, perplexing, and various, as evinces the truth of Shakspeare,—*We all know what we are; but know not what we may be.*

This intimacy with the Forbes' family was carried on more like a modern novel than a common acquaintance. Young George Forbes was born April 2, 1740:—I was not permitted to wear breeches until the same day appointed for George, the 2d of April, 1745. Lady Forbes,



notwithstanding title and great expectations in life, was not without many of her days being embittered:—Her heart and mind were softened by the too often experiencing humiliating events, disappointments, and afflictions. She was related to Lord Blessington and Lady Tyrawley, and was niece to Lady Granard, and bred up under her care. Her eldest son, young Lord Forbes, as he ripened into manhood, by frequent intercourse with his lovely relation, soon became a willing slave to the irresistible qualities of his captivating cousin: She gave him grace for grace, and love for love, yielded to his entreaties, and they were privately married——

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The maid that loves  
Goes out to sea upon a shatter'd plank,  
And puts her trust in miracles for safety,

trusting, as many young couples do, when the irrevocable knot was tied, that submission and intreaty, with a promise of forgiveness,—*This once, and I will do so no more*: But age, on these occasions, is either soon softened, or, like the everlasting flint, is hard and obdurate; and, in that instance, was so to such a degree, as rendered supplication, tears, and remonstrance, only incentives to increase instead of lessening the vengeance denounced.—That steeld character, on that occasion, was exemplified in the severest degree, and

executed with a Roman strictness—For the Earl of Granard not only banished his son, Lord Forbes, from his presence for ever, but, on the cruel supposition that Lady Granard had connived at the match, he, in the most stern and sudden manner, separated himself from her Ladyship, and never after saw or spoke to her; all mediation of families, no matter of what rank, were vain :—In this he was fixed, and acted as resolutely as our stage Count of Narbonne.

Lady Granard, to prove her disapprobation of the match, and to regain the affections of her Lord, instead of consolation and comfort to her niece, Lady Forbes, in her then calamitous situation, vowed never to behold her more; and in this determination she was as resolute as a Roman matron, and proved she possessed as steeled a mind as her inexorable Lord.—In one point only the female breast gave way to natural feeling :—Young George she saw, cherished, and adored; and often had him, while young, at her house in Argyle Buildings, near Soho-square :—But the grandfather never yielded to the ties of affinity;—he lived chiefly retired, at his own seat of Castle Forbes in Ireland.

Lord Forbes was generally with his regiment at Gibraltar, or with the regiment on its return to Ireland :—He had a house in Stephen's-Green,

Dublin, and occasionally made a secret excursion to England to visit his wife and son, who chiefly resided at her house in Richmond Buildings, Dean-street, Soho. The son was, at or before seven years old, put to a Mr. Black's boarding-school at Chiswick, where I was often taken as a visitor.—When turned of eleven, her Ladyship and son received orders to repair to Dublin: On this occasion her Ladyship took with her a carpet for her drawing-room, esteemed beautiful, the work of my mother, and I dare say it is in the family to this day, with several elegant worked screens, in tent stitch, executed by the same good ingenious hand.

About the age of thirteen he was brought back to England to finish his education, and then to be placed in his Majesty's Guards. Our meeting, on his arrival in England, as may be imagined, was very joyous; he was placed under the care of a Mr. Gibson, a rigid Scotchman, also under the eye of his uncle Admiral Forbes. He was soon sent to Harrow-school; I was eager to follow him, and in another year that wish was accomplished; of which a particular account will occur in the Theatrical History, and it will claim a short attention.

But of the young hero I am now speaking, when about sixteen he was in possession of his Majesty's colours, and often on guard at the

Savoy; he grew very dissipated, while under the direction of a Mr. Durel, (when not on duty) at his academy in King's-street, Golden-square; but as he could not be kept within bounds, Lady Forbes, from the accounts transmitted to Ireland, being greatly alarmed, and fearful he should incur the displeasure of his father, intreated his Lordship to grant her, the inspection and guardianship of her son in London, till he grew nearer a proper time of life to be trusted to the care of himself; this point was settled, and an house once more taken in the old spot, Richmond Buildings.

At first all seemed to promise fair, and a Mrs. Wilson, who had for many years been companion to Lady Forbes, (a sister of Mrs. Kelly, wife of honest old Cornelius Kelly, now living in Dublin,) was the person appointed to hint any private displeasure to our young Captain. The fond mother seemed intoxicated with the prospect of happiness before her delighted imagination; but of a sudden, on the non-appearance of George for a few days, she experienced the most alarming anxiety, which, after fruitless enquiries, was at last cleared up by a young couple from Gretna Green imploring her blessing. Her fortitude forsook her, and her exclamations of grief, surprise, and terror, for the consequences with Lord Forbes, and the dread of every horrid indignation from the old

Earl, overwhelmed her with the most poignant distress; for she well foresaw that every ill that fatally occurred, would be attributed to her needless assumption of residing in London—and, instead of preventing, would be accused of encouraging her son in every false step. Nor had she presence of mind, nor fortitude sufficient at the first shock, to enquire who this daughter was; but as soon as Reason could resume its seat; dreading an increasing tale of woe, yet obliged to require information; which being truly given, mitigated her uneasiness, and was most happily relieved on being pleasingly informed he had married a daughter of Sir Nicholas Baily, tho' her expectations of fortune, on enquiring, were but small: She proved a young lady of promise, fit to adorn any exalted station in life. Matters were ill received in Ireland; but by degrees his Lordship became better reconciled than could be expected.—By this amiable young lady, the family were blessed with the present Earl of Granard, now in Dublin, 1789, but she soon after fell into a decay, and, like a lily drooping, died. It was during this part of their history the reader will suppose, when I hereafter speak of Lady Forbes, (that young gentleman's mother) that I received such favours when first acting in London.

Soon after the death of that amiable young lady, the Earl of Granard died, but not before.

he was reconciled at the last to his son and grandson, then become Lord Forbes, and his father of course the Earl of Granard. The young Lord married a lady of quality in London: Soon after his second marriage he became Earl of Granard, but from modern fashions was separated from his Lady—He went to Ireland, his mother went with him; but, being then in possession of all his wishes in point of rank and fortune, I am truly grieved to add, he grew dissipated, and of course so very rapidly involved, as inevitably lost him all consequence and esteem amongst those where his rank entitled him to every respect and increase of popularity and dignity. To close my account of a gentleman so much my superior, and for whom I had the strongest attachments, and every reason to expect friendship and lasting regard, if promises and professions may be supposed to allow a claim, added to the intercourse of many years, I will finish this portrait, by mentioning when I was last in Dublin, in 1772, he was constantly with me by ten o'clock in a morning, and I often passed the evening with him, at his house in Myrion-street, near Myrion-square. But, three nights before my return to England, my company, on Thursday June 4, was particularly desired to meet Mr. Lee, attorney at law, on urgent business. It was our last meeting: The mighty business was to be a witness

to his will; which he, Mr. Lee (now living in Dublin) drew up—No not even a ring to his memory—nor at my benefit, which was on the 28th of May, did he so much as take a box or even a box ticket—but was there in person.—So much for friendship!—so much for dependence!—But I must not omit, that whenever I paid my respects in Myrion-street, there was plenty—nay, even a profusion of half pints of Claret, Burgundy, &c. Had he regarded himself more, I might perhaps, have profited by our strong intimacy, imbibed from childhood.

Let this be a lesson to place as much as possible our chief dependence on ourselves, rather than rely on ideal hopes or promises from superiors.—How did I retire home to my lodging that evening, is a natural question?—Why, good reader, whoever thou art, I assure you not unhappily—I reflected, that had the Earl felt for his own welfare, he would in all probability have retained some portion of feeling and humanity for his old—his intimate friend;—and, when reclined on my pillow, found myself at that moment possessed of every supply for my wants, with health and spirits to support those wants; I felt myself comparatively the greatest man of the two. He did not live many years after the Spring 1772. The young Lady Granard, (of whom I have not

the least knowledge) I believe, is married in Ireland—The Lady Dowager Granard, was ever my staunch friend; she retired to England, and died, within these few years, at her villa some miles from London.

The present Lord Granard, I am told, bears his blushing honours thick upon him; pray God he may have no frost to nip them, but restore his family laurels to their pristine health and vigour, and with many years enjoy that felicity long wanting to his predecessors.—He is spoke of in the warmest terms by all that know him, as a distinguished nobleman and a finished gentleman—I never saw him, but feel an attachment from my knowledge of, and favours conferred by his family in a course of years.

This little history, I hope, will not be found tiresome to the reader, particularly if perused by a native of Ireland; and flatter myself it will pass without censure: for, besides being authentic, I mean, as I pursue my historical journal, to mix various anecdotes and occurrences, without making it merely a languid stage repetition; several little traits of the same complexion and degree will be introduced, which I hope the reader will honour me with patience to endure, as they will in some measure prove relieving, explanatory, entertaining, and, indeed, are absolutely necessary as a key to the whole.



But to return to my Savoy history:—Added to the noble family lately recurred to, were Mr. and Mrs. William Chaigneau, from Dublin. He was agent to most of the regiments on the Irish establishment, a gentleman universally known, and whose memory is greatly respected: He wrote, for his amusement, the novel in two volumes, called *Jack Connor*.

Mrs. Chaigneau was a lady who attracted the good opinion of every one: They had only one daughter, whom they termed their *Darling Peggy*: This lovely pledge they could not part with on their excursions from Ireland to England; indeed, so careful were they,——“They permitted not the winds of heaven to visit her face too roughly.”

Mrs. Teague, Mrs. Chaigneau's sister, an intimate of my mother's, honoured me by standing as my godmother at my baptism; and in the chit chat and want of matter for conversation, when all were convened a few years after at the friendly fire-side, they proposed a wedding between Master Tate Wilkinson and Miss Peggy Chaigneau. This was agreed to, and my father actually performed the ceremony; and we were afterwards jokingly called *man and wife*. I believe I might be, at this mock marriage, six or seven—young Peggy about five or six. But to the lasting grief of Mr. and Mrs. Chaigneau they lost the idol of

their heart in two or three years afterwards, and I was left a disconsolate young widower. I mention this childish incident as it leads to more serious matter, hereafter, in this journal of "events and momentous history."

Alderman Forbes and his Lady—the well known ancient Cornelius Kelly and his wife—and many others made up a convivial Irish party at our cheerful board. My father being more attentive to the pleasures, than the cares of the world, I was sometimes at a boarding-school, sometimes not; perhaps six months in the year at Chelsea with a Mr. Bellas in Church-lane there; the other six at home; the next six months at Mr. Tempest's near Wandsworth; then again at home, particularly if the winter was severe. Some time afterwards I had tutors at home; then I went to Harrow School; but that I shall hereafter have occasion to mention, as introductory to something historical and whimsical.

It will here easily be perceived I was a great pet, which too often produces ignorance and stupidity, and ends in misfortunes; in short, the best part of my little education may be chiefly attributed to the cares and observations of a truly sensible, worthy, affectionate, and amiable mother, whose conduct was such, as not only to attract, but preserve the esteem of all who knew her; nor is her

name ever mentioned to this hour, by any person who retains the least recollection of her, but it is followed by the sigh of affection and true regard, and this equally from superiors or inferiors.

My idle hours, however, were not bestowed on marbles, cricket, or mixing with intimates of my own age and complexion;—for, except my friend George Forbes, I had but few play-mates—For, lo! a prayer-book was ever in my hand—the whole day was employed in reading exhortations, and every part of the church-service: So great a proficient was I in repeating it, that I was often invited to many families to read prayers. This early serious turn, gave rise to the particular notice of Mrs. Townsend, wife of Mr. Richard Townsend, who lived at the corner of Durham-yard, near the west end of the since built Adelphi. This lady was remarkable for exemplary piety, accompanied with cheerfulness and good humour; from which occurred many acts of charity and benevolence. My father had such attraction as a preacher, that she would not have missed the Savoy-church on a Sunday on any account; no slight indisposition could keep her away; though, from a bad state of health, the Savoy-church was the only place she visited, unless on some particular occasion not to be dispensed with.—This good old lady was

own sister to the late Jonas Hanway; a gentleman universally known and esteemed for his many benevolent acts. With this said sister, Mr. Jonas Hanway lived many years: He had been a friend of my father's, continued his good will to me, and was indefatigable in the Spring 1769 in removing the objections started by Lord Sondes, in regard to my obtaining acts of Parliament for the York and Hull patents: For, unless Mr. Jonas Hanway's influence and perseverance had prevailed on his Lordship to withdraw his opposition (which at that time, from his situation and consequence in the House, had great weight), it would have prevented, in all probability, my having acquired the honour and credit of either. Captain Hanway, the brother of Jonas, was married by my father to Miss Stowe, the then reigning toast of Newark-upon-Trent.

Besides the Townsends' constant attendance to their religious duties at the Savoy, amongst my father's pious admirers as a preacher, I remember Mrs. Graham, late Mrs. Yates, never missed her pew near the pulpit. Mr. Yates, now living, was a frequent attendant, and can and will testify that Dr. Wilkinson's manner of reading and preaching commanded respect and admiration. His discourses were excellent, his voice clear, strong, and sonorous, and his person graceful and handsome,

The few remaining persons who knew him then will now verify what I advance; for though only resident six weeks at Wakefield, and that not less than forty-five years ago, yet his manner of preaching, and forcible oratory, &c. had such strong effects, as to be well recollected at that place to this hour; and was often mentioned by the late Sir Michael Pilkington, who was at that time his intimate.

I being forcibly struck with my father's manner in the several church services, was never easy unless I had an old surplice thrown over my shoulders, and my whole delight was in praying, preaching, burials, &c. I was generally locked up in a room, supposing it a church; and in a large chair, the bottom taken out, went through the morning or evening service as it happened to occur in the course of the day; then replacing the chair bottom, and throwing off the old surplice of my father's, that had just before occupied my shoulders, I mounted and leaned over the back of the said chair, and with mighty authority proceeded with the sermon; several of which discourses were my father's.

My father was much pleased with this preaching turn, and on his hearing from Mrs. Townsend, my mother, and several others, how remarkably well I read prayers, and by all universally allow-

ed to be the father's own son in voice, manner, energy, &c. he pronounced Tate would make a great figure, if brought up to the church.

As it occurs to me this moment, so I am certain it will to my reader, who will ask, How could you, Mr. Tate, so audibly go on with this practice of preaching and praying a-loud under the same roof with your father, and without his knowledge? That is easily answered:—For know, good Sir, or Madam, the house we then occupied was large enough for three modern ones; old double stone stair-cases; and were truly the apartments of King John of France\*, when he was prisoner in England: So I had always apartments which I called my own, and they were in consequence appropriated to my religious rites.

My father, on the intelligence he had received of my pious inclinations, importuned me to read prayers, the litany, &c. by way of sample, to corroborate what he had heard from Mrs. Townsend, my mother, and others. I cheerfully complied; and on hearing me he much approved, and said he judged my seeing plays might aid my strong inclination, as well as contribute and assist me in the mode of public speaking. Now, reader, don't suppose this fond father and mo-

\* See the History of the Savoy.

ther were wicked play-goers ;—I do not remember ever hearing of their being at three plays in their whole lives. Most probably, had that been the case, a playhouse would have been familiarized to my ear : Not that I mean to convey they had a dislike to plays ; indeed, quite the reverse : But my father's affairs were generally in an embarrassed state, and my mother's pocket too much deranged to allow money for such an entertainment ; consequently, tho' she admired and approved of a good play, she was contented with the reading instead of seeing it : However they both wished to have Tate see a play. But having been, when five years old, with my father at a puppet-show at Bartholemew-Fair, which I thought a play, I there saw a sea fight, and a most terrible battle, which determined me never to see one again ;—therefore all proposals to go to the Theatre were in vain.

When about eight years old, chance threw a Mr. Page in my way. He was then House-keeper of Covent-Garden Theatre, known at that time only by, "Which house do you go to this evening—the New House, or the Old?" (Drury Lane.) Mr. Page wished for some place then in the power of Lord Cholmondley, with whom my father was intimate ; and to ingratiate himself the more, (finding neither Dr. Wilkinson nor his wife visited

either old or new house) he observed it was a pity Master Tate should not enjoy the diversions of the theatre.—When I heard this conversation, I felt an inconceivable objection, and dreaded the being forced into so terrible a place. My mother observed, that Tate would think of prayers only, and could not be persuaded to set his foot in a theatre; but, on after-reflection, they observed at what an easy rate, from the civility of Mr. Page, this entertainment could be procured, they determined to conquer my obstinacy by force. So, after my repeated refusals, my reverend dad at last grew really angry, and insisted on my going there, with this conditional salvo, that if I was not pleased, he pledged his honour he would never urge me to see another. I, choked with grief, assented to this cruelty, as I really thought it was; and when from the Savoy I had with slow steps arrived at Southampton-street, I grew sulky, and the servant to whom I was intrusted had actually to drag me to Covent-Garden Theatre. On seeing Mr. Page, the man being in livery, Master Tate could not be let into the boxes or pit: this I esteemed a lucky circumstance to favour my return; indeed had I been left to myself, soon would I have saluted the Savoy steps; but the man wishing to see the play, during this new started difficulty kept me fast as his prisoner, I was



conveyed with him, and safely stowed in the upper gallery: instead of receiving pleasure, sighs and sobs employed my time in this terrible place. Neither the noble theatre, nor the music had any charms for me: the whistling of the gods, and other noises of the gallery, only added to my disgust and terror. The play, I well remember, was the Busy Body, with Mr. Foote's Tea—But, O reader! of what materials are we composed!—scarcely had the first act finished before I imagined I was in the elysium I had been praying for; the charms of the church, which the day before were so attractive and sublime, were dissolved—

And, like the baseless fabric of a Vision,  
Left not a wreck behind.

The theatre from that time banished all my fervent piety, and my whole thoughts were occupied with the fascinating charms of the playhouse, actors, and actresses. My father—(O wicked man! says one of the mock saints) was pleased with the change, and said he was sure it would be the means of making me a better preacher: I now reversed my late tabernacle—and employed my evenings in lighting pieces of candle, dressing in any fantastical attire, and repeated, as well as I could recollect, parts in plays I had seen; which that Spring were nine in number. From early in January to March, I took

great care to visit Mr. Page every morning for play bills ; and was a constant attendant by permission, at the morning rehearsals. In March I was sent to Mr. Tempest's school near Wandsworth, where a nephew and two sons of Mr. Page's were placed ; and I saw no more plays till the Winter following.

At the time I have now mentioned seeing plays at Covent-Garden Theatre, Mr. Quin had retired to Bath, from whence he wrote the following laconic note, in November, 1747 :

“ I am at Bath.

“ Yours,

“ JAMES QUIN.”

Which note was as laconically answered :

“ Stay there and be damn'd.

“ Yours,

“ JOHN RICH.”

Every actor of consequence was engaged by Mr. Garrick for Drury-Lane, except the Mr. Quin just mentioned : This was Garrick's first year as manager. At Covent Garden, in the month of February, they only acted three times in the week, and frequently dismissed ; and were in truth a wretched company, and low in public estimation. Mr. Foote's Tea, which he had given as an entertainment at Covent-Garden Theatre in February 1748, he had first acted in 1746, at the

Hay Market; it was then called The Diversions of the Morning, attended with great good fortune, and every success his most sanguine wishes could suggest; but this being noticed by the Patentees of Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden, as an entertainment started in defiance of the severe act about that time passed, when Lord Chesterfield had observed in the House of Lords, "How cruel it was to lay a tax on so scarce a commodity as wit."—"Wit," continues Lord Chesterfield, "is a sort of property of those that have it, and too often the only property they have to depend on.—It is, indeed, but a precarious dependence.—Thank God! we, my Lords, have a dependence of another kind."

Mr. Foote had in this moment not only alarmed the treasury of the royal theatres; but, from his mimicry, had roused the indignation and resentment of all the performers. Application was made in consequence to the Lord Chamberlain, who sent to the justices of that district, and the new raised troops were put to flight, by a superior force of constables entering the theatre in terrible array! The audience was dismissed,—and the laughing Aristophanes left leaning towards Melpomene, in doleful soliloquy.

After many days anxiety from suffering this disgrace, a lucky thought occurred to him:—Being

certain of the good will of the Town, he advertised " Mr. Foote's compliments to his friends and the " public, desiring them to drink Tea at the Little " Theatre at the Hay-Market, every morning, at " the play-house prices."—The joke succeeded—the house was crowded—and he advanced before the curtain—being privately assured of protection, (his friends having been previously convened and informed of his intention) and said—That while the Tea was preparing, as he was then training some young actors for the stage, he would, with their permission, proceed with his instructions. This manœuvre was highly relished; and it became the universal fashion every noon to drink a dish of Mr. Foote's Tea; and, for two or three years, he termed pieces of imitation *giving of Tea*. And thence arose the puzzle which often happened to myself (some years after) on my giving Tea; and it frequently started difficulties and chagrin to a country audience.

The run of this morning's diversion occasioned the actors one and all to exclaim they should be ruined by his mimicry; therefore Mr. Foote very pleasantly said, Since that was the case, it was his duty to provide a situation for each lady and gentleman, so circumstanced; and that, instead of murdering blank verse, and assuming the characters of Kings and Queens, Lords and Ladies,

for which their abilities were far from being suitable, he would place them where their talents and behaviour could with more propriety be employed:

Mr. QUIN,—from his sonorous voice and weighty manner he appointed—*a Watchman*:

AS THUS;

“Past twelve o’clock, and a cloudy morning.”

---

Mr. DELANE—was supposed to have but one eye, therefore he fixed him as—*a Beggar Man in St. Paul’s Church-yard*:

“Would you bestow your pity on a poor blind man.”

---

Mr. RYAN,—whose voice for oddity and shrillness was remarkable,—*a Razor Grinder*:

“Razors to grind, scissars to grind, penknives to grind.”

---

Mrs. WOFFINGTON,—though beautiful to a degree had a most unpleasant squeaking pipe,—*an Orange Woman to the Playhouse*:

“Would you have some oranges,—have some orange chips, ladies and gentlemen,—would you have some nonpareils,—would you have a bill of the play?”

Mr. WOODWARD,—he was puzzled to find any trade he was fit for, therefore spoke the following speech, in his voice and manner, from Sir Fopling Flutter.

“Wherever I go, there goes a gentleman—  
 “upon my life a gentleman, and when you have  
 “said a gentleman, why, O! [*here Foote dropt*  
 “*Woodward’s voice and manner*] you have said  
 “more than is true.”

---

He was also very severe on GARRICK, who was apt to hesitate, (in his dying scenes in particular) as in the character of Lothario—

---

“adorns my fall, and  
 “chea—chea—chea—chea—chea—chears my heart  
 “in dy—dy—dying.”

---

Foote’s Tea, remembered by me so well from that time, when I became advanced in life made it seem strange that almost every person two hundred miles from the metropolis was not as well acquainted with it as myself, who had lived in London, without considering my long residence there had stamped a stronger remembrance on me than on three parts out of four of the rest of the inhabitants of that city.

To elucidate this matter I need only instance Mr. Foote’s pieces even of modern date, most of

them strongly pointed, animated, and bold in the drawing, not destitute of great wit in the composition, and pleasing to a degree in the representation,—yet being local, and at the same time merely drawn for reflections on the follies of the day, their merit and claim to support cannot prevent their passing to oblivion; while, for years to come, we shall behold pieces of inferior merit, only aided by flimsy insipid mediocrity, proceed with dulness, and make their exit with a natural decay. Elizabeth Canning, Mary Squires the gipsy, and Miss Blandy, were such universal topics in 1752, that you would have supposed it the business of mankind, to talk only of them; yet now, in 1790, ask a young man of twenty-five or thirty a question relative to these extraordinary personages, and he will be puzzled to answer, and will say—"What mean you by enquiring?—I do not understand you."—The following lines from Mr. Foote's prologue of 1753 will prove how occurrences are remembered or forgotten.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| The many various objects that amuse             | } |
| This busy curious time by way of news,          |   |
| Are plays, elections, murders, lott'ries, Jews; |   |
| All these compounded fly throughout the nation, |   |
| And set the whole in one great fermentation!    |   |
| True British hearts the same high spirits show, |   |
| Be they to damn a farce, or fight a foe.        |   |

C 2

One day for liberty the Briton fires,  
 The next he flames—for Canning, or for Squires.  
 In like extremes your laughing humour flows;  
 Have you not roar'd from pit to upper rows,  
 And all the jest was,—what?—a fiddler's nose\*! }  
 Pursue your mirth; each night the joke grows stronger,  
 For as you fret the man, his nose looks longer.

And strange to add, that *Nosey*, from the use of being loudly called for in 1753, is still retained by the galleries, particularly at present in the York circuit; where, without compliment, the leader is a man of great professional merit, but has a nose as much too long as the manager's is too short!

The Tea of mine for two or three years after I first went on the stage, I judged would be an increase of lasting success, although the season 1747, when Mr. Foote was at Covent-Garden giving his Tea, proved, that though a blazing comet two years before, all attraction was over, the wonder had ceased, and no longer brought grift

\* “The person here intended is Monf. Cervetti, (engaged at Drury-Lane many years before the trial of Elizabeth Canning) who has been a standing joke with the upper-gallery, for a long time past, on account of the length of his nose; but as I am informed that no features of his mind are out of proportion, unless it be that his good qualities are extraordinary, I take this opportunity to mention, that it is cruel to render him uneasy in the business, in which he is eminent, and by which he must get a livelihood.” *Note to Foote's Prologue.*”



to his mill. Now, let the tide be ever so strong, yet those ladies or gentlemen, whether favoured by Melpomene or Thalia, if they flatter themselves with thinking like Alonzo——

Seen for ever yet for ever new,

will find themselves deceived, and will fail in two points, unless they attend to prudence and œconomy, and by those means secure an independence, which will greatly add to the continuance of fashion beyond its natural flirtation. And as a weak constitution is often prolonged by strict attention to preservatives;—so the performer who is secure in purse may look big and frighten the folks with a threat of—"I will leave the stage."— Besides what a happiness it is to have a reserve against——

The thousand ills that flesh is heir to.

In the early part of the winter 1748 I was brought from Wandsworth to keep my birth-day on the 27th of October, and again after Christmas to see two plays; then again at Whitsuntide to see Mrs. Woffington in Sir Harry Wildair, and Apollo and Daphne—and Harlequin get into a quart bottle, being the year of the Bottle Conjuror. I complained of great severity indeed, as my father and mother had been so cruel as to keep me nine months out of the twelve at school.

This season was much superior to the former one

at Covent-Garden, as Mr. Quin returned from his Bath retirement,—Mr. Delane and Mr. Luke Sparks from Drury-Lane—also Mrs. Woffington;—and, from Dublin, Mrs. Ward and Miss Bellamy, who made her first appearance in Belvidera.—The following bill will give an idea of the company.

By the COMPANY of COMEDIANS.

At the

THEATRE-ROYAL in *Covent-Garden*,

*This present Monday, being the 17th of Oct. 1748, will be presented*

The FIRST PART of

King HENRY the Fourth,

With the Humours of *Sir John Falstaff*.

The Part of *Sir John Falstaff* to be performed

By Mr. QUIN.

The *King* by Mr. SPARKS,

(It being the first Time of his Appearance on that Stage.)

The *Prince of Wales* by Mr. RYAN.

|   |        |  |  |                                       |        |   |
|---|--------|--|--|---------------------------------------|--------|---|
| Prince John<br>Westmoreland<br>Northumberland | } by { | Mills Hippisley.<br>Mr. Holtham.<br>Mr. Pagot. |  | Sir Walter Blunt<br>Douglas<br>Vernon | } by { | Mr. Ridout.<br>Mr. Anderion.<br>Mr. Gibson. |
|   |        |  |  |                                       |        |   |

*Worcester* by Mr. DANCE\*.

The *Two Carriers* by Mr. ARTHUR and Mr. DUNSTALL.

*Francis* by Mr. COLLINS.

|                             |        |   |  |                                |        |   |
|-----------------------------|--------|---|--|--------------------------------|--------|---|
| Gadhill<br>Bardolph<br>Peto | } by { | Mr. Bencraft.<br>Mr. Marten.<br>Mr. Stoppelaer. |  | Sheriff<br>Traveller<br>Hofsch | } by { | Mr. Oates.<br>Mr. Smith.<br>Mrs. Bambridge. |
|                             |        |   |  |                                |        |   |

*Lady Piercy* by Mrs. WOFFINGTON.

And the Part of *Hotspur* to be performed

By Mr. DELANE,

Who has not appear'd on that Stage these Seven Years.

Boxes, 5s.—Pit, 3s.—First Gal. 2s.—Upper Gal. 1s.

*No Persons to be admitted behind the Scenes, or any Money to be returned after the Curtain is drawn up.*

PLACES for the BOXES to be taken of Mr. PAGE,  
at the Stage-door of the THEATRE.

\* Brother to the late City Architect. He was afterwards called Mr. LOVE.

N.B. These Persons were then in their Prime, but are all  
since dead.

When in town, every morning, by Mr. Page's permission, I attended the rehearsal: There the desire to become an actor at only ten years of age appeared very conspicuous, and will fully prove and clear an error conceived by Mr. Churchill, (who was afterwards convinced to the contrary) that Mr. Foote instructed me in the art of imitation; which was neither truth, nor within the bounds of possibility: My frequent morning's admittance at the theatre, for two years, intoxicated my brain, and when I returned from that (to me) most luxurious treat, my mind was solely employed with acting and studying plays, particularly those I had seen and which had made the deepest impression. I formed a mad idea thus early that I was certainly a manager of a theatre; and when locked up in a room, I there supposed myself, by turns, the different persons I had observed. This rehearsing frenzy increased to such a degree that at last I fitted up a room in a theatrical manner; as a proof I have now several hundred of my play-bills, in full-sized paper, wrote in red and black, and could at this instant as easily tell what plays, farces, and pantomimes were performed at my theatre in the Savoy, with a knowledge of all the performers, whether married, single, old, or young, and what they played, as if all the vision had been realized—The bills I have often produ-

red, not as a proof of my sense, but insanity, or theatrical influenza.

The rehearsals that year were very regular at Covent-Garden. The scenes for Volpone, Henry IV. and their stock plays, (for, at that house, they seldom acted new ones or revived old ones) were regularly changed—and all was awful silence.—Mr. Quin was sole monarch, and had a manner most terrible to the under performers, carpenters, &c.; if he spied me within two yards of the wings—"Get away, boy!"—and struck his cane with such violence as made me tremble.

Mrs. Woffington had that year left David Garrick for more reasons than one:—First, she had (before he proved a false swain) lived with the charming Garrick, who wrote a favourite song called *Lovely Peggy*—

Once more I'll tune the vocal shell,

O'er hills and dales my passion tell, &c.

She was mortified at his marriage, for she lost the reigning sway she expected to have had in sharing the cares of monarchy.—Mrs. Pritchard's division of characters hurt her; and Mrs. Clive, who was superior to fear, was a constant thorn. So much has been said of Mrs. Woffington, that it is needless to mention her Lady Townly, Lady Betty, &c.—An elegant figure in breeches—she looked and acted Sir Harry Wildair with such spi-

rit and deportment, that she gave flat contradiction to what Farquhar asserted,—That when Wilks died, Sir Harry Wildair might go to the Jubilee;—and yet so far has his prophecy been fully verified, no male performer, even Garrick or Woodward, succeeded, but all have failed in that part; she repeated it with never ceasing applause for several years. Her excellence, when at Drury-Lane, occasioned the following joke, which I do not give as new, but hope it will bear the repeating.

Dame Clive and that lady were ever at variance: Mrs. Woffington coming into the green-room, after a favourite scene in Sir Harry, in high spirits, exultingly said to Mrs Clive—She had got so much applause, that, by the living God! she believed one half of the audience took her for a man.—“O!”—says Clive, *archly*—“do not be uneasy, “as you are satisfied the other half know the contrary.”

The early part of this season I had been at a correct rehearsal of the Careless Husband—Lord Foppington, Mr. Cibber; Sir Charles Easy, Mr. Ryan; Lord Morelove, Mr. Delane; Lady Easy, Mrs. Ward; Lady Graveairs, Mrs. Hale; Edging, Mrs. Ridout; Lady Betty Modish, Mrs. Woffington;—after which I hastened home to repeat what I could recollect. My mother observing me so particular, stood at the room door to listen, as she thought she heard a talking, and

hearing me pronounce in a strange voice---“ My Lord Foppington give me my snuff-box.”—— She, after dinner, desired to know what I was talking of when shut up by myself? I was rather perplexed, and said—I had fancied all that day I was sometimes Mr. Cibber, but oftener Mrs. Woffington, as she had acted Lady Betty delightfully. On this she sent for the play, and I studied different parts of it, and also the first scene of Sir John and Lady Brute, which I had seen that winter: I was then, I believe, very like Mr. Quin and Mrs. Woffington; nay, am certain I was, as I can repeat the same at this instant in like manner; a proof what force first impressions make in the days of our youth.

This soon produced (when I was visiting abroad, or when we had company at home) an intreaty for Master Tate to act Mr. Quin and Mrs. Woffington: The applause of the company added fuel to the flame.——Drury-Lane Theatre I did not see till the season 1750, and, strange to tell! did not wish to go there, so strongly was I attached to sweet Covent-Garden;—and a something like hallowed ground, to this moment, occasions reverence and awe for the steps and avenues of that theatre. A full house at Covent-Garden, then, was pleasing intelligence:—The preference and success of Garrick and Drury-Lane I could not relish.—

This employment I pursued with unremitting slavery, even to the prejudice of health.

In September 1749, I had an ague and fever, which could not be conquered, but kept me confined all the winter, except being permitted to see three plays: Lady Jane Grey was one, and to this moment I recollect Quin, saying in Gardiner, "I hold no speech with hereticks and traitors."

September 1750 was the remarkable year Barry and Cibber joined forces with Quin and Woffington at Covent-Garden, as also Macklin. On seeing Mr Barry and Mrs. Cibber, lessened in my opinion the merit I had alone allowed to my first favorites, Mr. Quin and Mrs. Woffington. The run of *Romeo and Juliet* was that season, when the famous controversy happened between the two houses on account of this play, and which commenced at both Theatres on Friday the 28th of September. The following is an exact bill of the Covent-Garden play.



By the COMPANY of COMEDIANS.

At the

THEATRE-ROYAL in *Covent-Garden*.

*This present Friday, being the 28th of Sept. 1750, will be presented a Play, call'd*

# ROMEO AND JULIET.

The Part of *Romeo* to be performed

By Mr. B A R R Y.

(Being the first Time of his Appearing on that Stage.)

*Capulet* by Mr. S P A R K S.

*Montague* by Mr. BRIDGEWATER.

*Escalus* by Mr. ANDERSON. | *Paris* by Mr. LACEY.

*Escuolio* by Mr. GIBSON. | *Lady Capulet* by Mrs. BARRINGTON.

*Fryar Laurence* by Mr. RIDOUT.

*Gregory* by Mr. ARTHUR. | *Abram* by Mr. DUNSTALL.

*Sampson* by Mr. COLLINS. | *Balthazar* by Mr. BRANSEY.

*Mercutio* by Mr. M A C K L I N.

*Tibalt* by Mr. D Y E R.

*Nurse* by Mrs. M A C K L I N.

And the Part of *Juliet* to be performed

By Mrs. C I B B E R.

An additional scene will be introduced, representing

The Funeral Procession of JULIET,

Which will be accompanied with

A S O L E M N D I R G E,

*The Music composed by Mr. ARNE.*

With an occasional Prologue to be spoken

By Mr. B A R R Y.

Boxes, 5s.—Pit, 3s.—First Gal. 2s.—Upper Gal. 1s.

PLACES for the Boxes to be taken of Mr. PAGE,  
at the Stage-door of the THEATRE.

*To begin exactly at Six o'Clock.*

The first play I saw at Drury-Lane was that year;—it was the Mourning Bride—Osmyn, Mr. Garrick; Zara, Mrs. Pritchard; Almeria, Miss Bellamy.—Garrick was not in my secret opinion so enchanting as Barry—Miss Bellamy very inferior indeed to Mrs. Cibber—but Mrs. Pritchard's Zara struck me with admiration. The farce was *Lethe*; in which the characters were so inimitably performed by Woodward, Yates, Shuter, Blakes, Miss Minors, and Mrs. Clive, that I felt actually angry at myself for being so pleased with the performers of the Old House, when in a comparative view with my favorites of the New. I mention this, as an instance of the force of obstinate and headstrong partiality, whether we are young or old; and am sorry to observe, that conviction or reason, will not conquer our prejudices as we grow old, any more than prevail over the sentiments of waxen youth.

The Winter of 1750, I saw several plays; and for fear of being tainted with the prevailing powers of Drury-Lane, entered not that fashionable place of resort. The end of the season Mr. Quin left the stage; the opening play in the September following, (1751) was the Recruiting Officer, at Covent-Garden; Mrs. Woffington's name was inserted for Sylvia, but on some sudden

disagreement she went off for Ireland, and a Mrs. Vincent performed the part.

In October 1751, was Mr. Mossop's and Mr. Ross's first appearance at Drury-Lane, in the characters of Richard and young Bevil. I passed my time as the preceding season, only with this difference, that I attended both Theatres; they closed as usual.—In the Autumn, what I had ardently wished for, two years before, came to pass; as my being sent to Harrow School was put into real practice, by my coming to the age of thirteen, the ensuing 7th of Nov. 1752, (being the year of the New Style). This, when at a distance, I thought pleasing, but for a Manager - a Critic, to be sent to school, was a stroke of real grief and horror; my pride prevented me from owning the truth, for I had sometime before petitioned for this indulgence, therefore would not let my veracity or resolution be called in question.—So, O woeful day! to Harrow School I was conveyed by my mother; where, on seeing my friend George Forbes, I endeavoured to compose myself, and submit to slavery. He introduced me to the Duke of Gordon, and his brother, Lord Adam Gordon; also at that school, (which was then second only to Eaton in this kingdom,) were Lord Downe, Sir John Ruffiate, and the Capt. Dives's, to whom I have been much obliged. But

instead of the place becoming more easy by habit, the manager rose strongly in my heated imagination:—Studying a play was the employment of a man, but going to school, the God of Idleness convinced me was intolerable;—I therefore resolved on a retreat, not doubting but if I related to my mother, that I had seen three boys whipt, she would relent and receive me home again, and soften all resentment from my father, who humoured me to a greater degree than she did herself; but when he was in a passion, which thank God was but seldom, it was dreadful! To execute with wisdom and discretion, such a dangerous undertaking, the good, the unfortunate Andrée used not more precaution.—I waited for a public holiday, and loading my pockets with oranges and gingerbread the night before, got up at six in the morning, and proceeded down Harrow-Hill; unfortunately, not being accustomed to the road, I turned to the right, and every now and then looked up to spy if any one was pursuing me, so strong is guilt.——

Suspicion ever haunts the guilty mind—  
The thief doth fear each bush an officer.

Having walked for some time, I read on a stone—  
“One mile to Partington,” or some such name; I was alarmed, and hastened back to my old

ground, the bottom of the hill: If I looked behind, and saw a man on horseback, I was sure he was in pursuit of me. I soon reached the fifth mile-stone, where some men were at work on the roads; here I was again puzzled, by a separation of two broad carriage-ways, and fearing a second blunder, said, "Pray, good men, which is the road to London?" "Why," says one of them--"to the left; but I am afraid, young gentleman, you have run away from school?"—"No indeed," says I, and to convince him he was wrong, took the only method to prove him quite in the right, by immediately taking to my heels. The men laughed, and cried, "Catch him,—stop him."—I was truly a frightened hare. After stumbling, running, &c. at last I was obliged from sickness and great fatigue to stop; but, finding no pursuers, in about ten minutes I continued my journey, and got safe into London: When advanced beyond the pur-lieus, I stopped at a coffee-house, and breakfasted. One danger being over, I now began, when hunger was satisfied, to feel other qualms, which were the approach of home: I walked very slow, and got to the Savoy, just as the bell was ringing for prayers; I sauntered till it ceased, well knowing that my father was then secure, and for fear of mistake took a peep to be certain that he read the prayers. That point being settled to my fa-

tisfaction, I rapped at the door, and soon with perfect ease, asked my mother how she did.—Her surprise was great—all my relation of cruelties, and whipping the little boys would not avail; she expostulated on the great expence of the entrance to the masters, as Dr. Thackeray, Mr. Prior, &c.—said she would soften the matter as well as she could—but back I must go—I was ordered to retire; and on so doing, my reflections were by no means the most pleasant. When commanded into the presence of my father, I was conditionally pardoned; but after a bit of dinner, for which I had not the least appetite, a chaise was ordered, and a servant sent with me, who was to stop the carriage at the bottom of Harrow Hill, in order if possible, that my disgrace of running away might be a secret. This I was obliged to submit to, and I arrived at the fatal spot, like a culprit prepared for execution; but when I came to the borders of the village, I soon heard the warhoop of Indians, and perceived almost the whole school assembled, and ready to tar and feather me for my flight.

From many tokens of intelligence and searching enquiries, I was soon discovered to have been more than merely out of bounds. I therefore like a poor deserter, wanted no more than handcuffs, to make my appearance and contrition truly

in character, when, like a god, my friend George Forbes appeared, (who was held in great respect and esteem) drew me from my disagreeable situation, and under his arm conveyed me safe to Mr. Reeves's (the writing master) house, where I was boarded, and delivered me from the hands of the Philistines. Mr. and Mrs. Reeves were of a genteel turn ; and what do you think, good reader, better than that,—they were critics, and fond of plays ; and what was better still, Mrs. Reeves's sister (then on a visit) was play and romance mad ; but at this time of distress, I was not acquainted with those delightful circumstances ; however they were kind, not austere upon my disgrace ; and Mr. Reeves interfered to prevent the deserter's corporal punishment ; but the adventure reached the ear of Admiral Forbes, who fearing my bad example might have an ill effect on his nephew, over whom he judged I had great influence, which might occasion his taking a trip over to Dublin, to see *his mamma*, insisted on my being made an example of terror, by way of prevention.

Dr. Thackerey, was as benign and humane a man, as ever was placed at the head of such an unruly community as a public school ; but the Reverend Prior, loved to lift his arm up for the awful flogging, better than Fielding's Parson Thwackum, and judged himself robbed of his

rights, when he was prevented from putting in force his love of torture; he was in truth a despicable, severe, and disagreeable tyrant: But on the hint being given, while he went out of the great school-room, I believe I might be speaking a little too loud, when the head scholar ordered me to stand before the throne, and am sorry to say, except from my friend George Forbes, I perceived universal exultation; for the lad that runs away is looked on like the cowardly soldier who retires on the day of battle: Soon entered Governor Prior, who with exulting features, ordered me to be prepared and brought immediately to the block, and, to strike terror, desired attention to his skill on the occasion; and as what must be, must be, I patiently resigned to my cruel fate. He never acted the barbarian better——

The blood did follow where the rod was driven,  
The flesh did quiver where the birchen tore;  
But that was foreign to the soul——  
Not all his strokes, or energetic arm  
Cou'd force a groan away that he might guess at.

This proved in fact a most lucky adventure—— as misfortunes past prove stories of delight; for, when school was over, I was generally saluted and applauded for my heroism, and from that time was on good terms with all the scholars. My boarding-house became every day more fa-



atisfactory; for my fond mother, to keep me easy under my bondage, after such a life of indulgence as I had been accustomed to, was even near in her family expences, and denied herself what was absolutely necessary, in order to send Tate luxuries, such as tea, sugar, nice chickens, bottles of wine, pound cake, &c. with the play-bills of the week: those presents I gave to Mrs. Reeves, which occasioned an intimacy, and my sitting up to supper; this brought on stage conversation, and from that I was asked, whenever they had company, to act plays. So considering myself as a manager in distress, the time passed tolerably pleasant till December. We had only one dispute, which was Mr. Reeves's pronouncing Garrick not only the best actor, but what was more intolerable, the best Romeo; to which I must have yielded, had not the wife declared entirely on my side of the argument, and wondered her husband could make such a comparison—the sister avowed the same; and they both agreed that Barry was a charming man, and made love like an angel, to which I assented and significantly said, It was not worth contending; for it really was not every one that saw a play who was a perfect judge of acting.

It may not be improper to observe how necessary it is to make every one a wellwisher, instead of an enemy:—Friends are happy circumstances;

they are the foundation-stone of human greatness, from the highest to the lowest ;—civility is worth the preserving, for if offended, a Star and Garter may find himself hurt by the rudeness of a black-guard : Therefore as many friends as possible it is our interest to procure, provided they can be gained without descending to meanness.—A few insignificant enemies are not amiss, they rouse the spirits to action and vigour ; while the kindness of friends and self-love are so far from improving the mental faculties, that they only act on the understanding as laudanum, and all real genius is lulled into lethargy and sluggishness.

From my civility to Mrs. Reeves's sister, I was not only made of some little consequence at Harrow ; but the sequel will prove it led to an *important* part of my future life.

While at Mr. Reeves's, a theatrical fête was to be given before the Christmas holidays in the great school-room, as the custom had been for some years to act three nights before that period, to which all the families from Stanmore and the adjacent villages were invited ; the room was very commodious for such a purpose. Shapes were borrowed from Mr. Rich, who, it seems, always obliged the school on such occasions. Dr. Thackeray (the good governor) fixed on the Roman Father for the leading scholars to enact.

The first night the play was presented I was an auditor, but Mrs. Reeves and her sister were stung to the quick; their pride was hurt to think their favourite boarder, and such a promising actor, had not a chance for fame, and a share of the applause at this public time.

Mrs. Reeves's sister felt herself so unhappy on this trivial matter, that she waited on Dr. Thackeray with me in her hand, and requested I might rehearse Lord and Lady Townly, which the Doctor good-naturedly assented to; and I instantly performed Lord Townly, *a-la-mode* Barry—Lady Townly, *a-la-mode* Woffington, which actually broke through the buckram of the college and the Doctor's accustomed solemnity, and he and his good woman laughed very heartily; for though he never saw more than three or four plays in a year, and that during the Christmas recess, the transition of voice and manner from Barry to Woffington, pleased the Doctor so much, that he actually sent for his eldest son Frederick, and desired him to study the first scene of Lord Townly, and ordered it to precede the Roman Father the next play-night; to which Mr. Frederick like a good son acquiesced, promised to be perfect, bowed, retired, and kept his word. Mrs. Reeves's sister and I returned in triumph, and, after congratulations of success on our embassy, much consultation was ne-

cessary for the equipment and the attire of Lady Townly, as if a matter of the utmost importance. What they could not furnish me with, was borrowed from their connexions in the neighbourhood, and with infinite pains attended to the manner and taste they were to shew on the *entrée* of the new performer.

After, not less than three hours in the equipment, a chair (which I wonder at in so small a place) was to be hired, to convey me to Harrow-Theatre, and not I assure you without some emotion: not that my first acting seemed distressing, nor was it particular my playing Lady Townly, as two young gentlemen of family personated Horatia, and Valeria; and as to dress, my English attire as much surpassed the Roman ladies on this occasion, as Mrs. Bellamy's new Paris-dress is asserted by her to have outshone Mrs. Woffington's, when they acted the Rival Queens: However not having in reality played before any number of persons fit to be termed an audience, it gave me a tremor natural to all young actors. My performance was so much superior, and so infinitely more like a theatrical one, than that of the young gentlemen who acted in the Roman Father, that I bore away the palm, notwithstanding Publius was represented by a Lord! Nor is it to be wondered at, as they played only from an

established custom of the school; therefore merely judged it a pleasing relief, as by so doing for ten or twelve days they relinquished the dryer studies of Greek and Latin; but no more likely to make a figure as actors, without the possession of the God, than those young persons were, who are related to have acted with Garrick when he was a child at Litchfield; for they, as his play-mates, performed merely from civility and compliance to his will, whilst we may venture to pronounce *his* whole soul was in agitation.

The effect of my Lady Townly was surprising indeed; so much so, that every one of the audience spoke to me with marks of attention, and an universal request was made the next night, (the last of playing) that I would not only oblige them with Lady Townly, but some other part, to try my skill in contrast—for they were pleased to add, that every one was delighted; and those phrases are not to be wondered at as the speeches of parents and neighbours at a school play. I do not imagine any one night of real success, when even attended with the *pecunia*, ever gave me more exquisite pleasure;—joy without measure to feel myself, on such a public occasion, the first mark of attention, as a theatrical performer, at a place of such consequence as Harrow School.

The request of the additional performance the

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ensuing play-night, (which had my secret and eager wishes of compliance) Dr. Thackerey not only assented to, but gave his approbation. I, being attached to Mr. Barry's acting, fixed on the garden-scene in Romeo and Juliet to precede the Roman Father, and Lady Townly after the play. But here a difficulty started, which was no less than the want of a Juliet; for though Mr. Frederick Thackerey had consented to be Lord Townly, he would not submit to be my Juliet. This occasioned a demur; but Sir John Ruffiate, on hearing of the obstacle, removed all inconvenience, by obligingly offering himself for Juliet, and this mighty matter was immediately concluded, and as speedily put into practice; but as I did not suppose a man of quality could be so good a performer as myself, I therefore, manager-like, taught Sir John some of Mrs. Cibber's striking manner in the particular passages,—which did not a little add to my self-opinion. The third night finished to the extent of my ambition—I *looked, talked, walked, and felt* myself a great actor.—Such Things Were! Such Things Are! and Such Things may be yet to come, as must decide whether my play of life will end with, All in the Right, or All in the Wrong? If All in the Right, I shall then conclude like Pangloss, “That All has been for the Best.”

On my return to supper at Mr. Reeves's, they were as proud and pleased as if their own son had met with the same approbation. Indeed my thanks were due to them;—for this little esteem which I acquired at the school, &c. certainly was owing not only to their thought, but they had even gone lengths beyond their situation in accomplishing a matter that required some degree of difficulty and address. Every one who turns over these leaves will reflect how fortunate it was for me to be boarded with a family that would condescend to humour me; had I been placed in a morose boarding-house, bred up as I had been, (or rather not bred at all) I must have led the life of a sulky Negro slave—But better things, thank God, were in store.

I cannot quit Harrow for the Christmas recess without recollecting that my stage success, as I then termed it, at that place, occasioned serious reflections from the wise directors: For my exhibition (from the peculiarity of what I attempted) was the groundwork of public conversation in the circle of Harrow critics; it was therefore judged truly necessary to convene a cabinet council, which was directly summoned, where it was agreed on mature deliberation, *nemine contradicente*, not in future to have any more plays acted by the young gentlemen at Harrow School: The annual custom was therefore abolished, and I

am told that law has been strictly adhered to from that time to this, as they feared it might get the appellation of (and an idle report be circulated in the world, that it was) a school for breeding up actors in lieu of scholars. Though without doubt, since that period, private plays having been so very fashionable, many changes of opinion must have occurred for the improvement of that little state since my happy acting there in Dec. 1752—but I judge, had the ancient custom been revived and tolerated, the newspapers or some chance intelligence would have before this fully informed me. Adieu to Harrow-Hill, and hey for the Christmas holidays, Savoy, and Plays!

I was received at home, as usual, with fondness and partiality even to a fault: If asked a question relative to the progress I had made in my learning, I quickly answered it with relating the fine play we had performed, and that was sufficient; but more so, when I assured them, I was the leading actor; and father and mother were so pleased they determined Tate should not be disappointed of his darling amusement. I visited as soon as possible my favourite palaces of Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden, and if money was ever so short at home, it was raised by some means, no matter how difficult.

I particularly recollect seeing on Saturday the 30th of December, the Siege of Damascus—



Phocyas, *Barry*; Eumenes, *Ryan*; Caled, *Sparks*; Abudah, *Ridout*; Eudocia, Mrs. *Cibber*; with the dances of *Il Pastore* and *Il Morlaco*, by Signor *Maranesi*, and Signora *Bugiani*, two excellent dancers;—by the bye the dances at that time were greatly supported, very different from what they are at the Theatres now.—*Cooke* and *Hilliard*, both in a first degree, were added to the *Maranesi* and the *Bugiani*. The entertainment was *Apollo* and *Daphne*, by command of his Royal Highness Frederick Prince of Wales, who seldom went to Drury-Lane; what were the reasons to have occasioned a disgust I cannot give, or even guess at—Had it been out of compliment to old *Quin*, who had the instruction of his present Majesty in his youth, it might in some measure have accounted for it; as *Quin* often exclaimed, on being told that his Majesty delivered his maiden speech with gracefulness and precision—"Ay, I knew it would be so—for *I* taught the boy to speak." But in 1753 that cause had ceased, as *Quin* had retired in the spring 1751 to Bath, and quitted the stage, but the Prince's partiality continued.

On Monday, January 9, 1753, Mr. Smith made his first *entrée* in the character of Theodosius, or the Force of Love—*Varanes*, *Barry*; *Athenais*, Mrs. *Cibber*: it was repeated the Tuesday, Wed-

nesday and Thursday following. Mr. Smith's first benefit was on Saturday, April 7, 1753, the Siege of Damascus.

When the drum beat for marching orders to the camp at Harrow, I feigned sickness very well; and by continuing at home I was at the height of bliss. Mr. and Mrs. Reeves were, on account of their civilities to me at Harrow, constant visitors at my father's during the recess. Mr. Wier, gentleman to Sir Francis Delaval, was smitten with my friend Mrs. Reeves's sister, *the Lass of the Hill*; and Dr. Wilkinson was appointed to perform the holy rites.—I was father on the occasion, and gave her away.—I remember it was a cheerful evening with us all; and a genteel supper was ordered by Sir Francis Delaval, and so ended the marriage with the usual ceremony.

My attention to the stage was truly unremitting—it was my day—my life;—and it is not to be wondered at that my imitations, when really produced on the stage, were thought superior to Mr. Garrick's or Mr. Foote's: For those particular actors and actresses, whose manner and voice I so strongly presented to the public, were taken on the truest ground, that of feeling myself at the time the person I imitated, and not exaggerated into buffoonery;—and this was my work, my toil, my constant practice for some years before I played in

London. My mode was, that as ideal manager, I appointed myself to act Lord Townly. Now, except Lady Townly, Lady Grace, and Mr. Manly (for I played all the parts) had each a different voice and manner, it did not please the buildings of my fancy unless that I had performers supposed to be under my command, as thus :

*Lord Townly, as Mr. Barry.* Going out so soon after dinner Madam?

*Lady Townly, as Mrs. Woffington.* Lard! my Lord, what can I possibly do at home?

*Manly, as Mr. Sparks.* Yes, Madam, in rather turning myself out of doors than her.

*Lady Grace, as Mrs. Elmy.* Don't you think that would be going too far?

*Manly as Mr. Sparks.* I don't know but it might, Madam—for in strict justice I think she ought rather to go than I, &c.

A stranger on those occasions to have been at the door would have thought that four or five persons were gathered together, and were rehearsing a play. I had so habituated myself to this fluctuation of voice, and to move and change my features to those of the actors and actresses I judged myself personating, that from impulsive enthusiasm, (for I cannot think of another word) I felt, as if each individual I spoke and acted like were at that instant under the restrictions and re-

verence due to a real audience of the most collected and fashionable consequence; and

My fiction and dream of passion  
 Did work my soul up to its own conceit,  
 That from its fancy all my visage warm'd.  
 My whole function suiting  
 With forms to my conceit.

When this thought is supported by an applauding audience, it becomes more truly relished than an auditor or reader can suppose: For the best actor that ever trode the stage, as Betterton, Booth, Wilks, Cibber, Quin, Garrick, Barry, or Kemble, if not supported by encouragement, would still have remained himself—not the character he represented, unless happily thrown off his guard by the smiles and applause of the public; which bestowed, “On filken wings sublime he cuts the air,” and is in reality the monarch he then represents. The same aid, the same comfort, makes the comedian, as well as the tragedian, but not in so great a degree, as circumstances differ widely—a smile only will cheer a drooping comedian, but the same smile is immediate death to the tragic hero.

At the end of the season, May 1753, Mrs. Cibber left Covent-Garden, and Barry lost his Juliet, but soon provided himself another—A Miss Nossiter made her first appearance in that character, on Wednesday the 10th of October.

Miss Bellamy returned to Covent-Garden; but her first appearance was very different from what she relates in her memoirs.

I will put a stop for the present to Theatrical Anecdotes, as well as of my family and self and must here intreat leave to introduce a little history of

#### LADY CORNWALLIS'S FATHER

a year before its real date, that it may not intervene too much with that part of my life, which on reflection, from that hour to my last, will be truly interesting to my feelings; and I doubt not, but it will claim and obtain the tear of pity. Amongst the variety of our acquaintance and visitors, my mother's most constant intimate was a Mrs. Jones, wife of Captain James Jones, of his Majesty's third regiment of guards, who lived in the house allotted for the superintendant officer in the Savoy-Square, and not above two hundred yards from our dwelling. As a private family history, this tale might be thought intruding, tiresome, and impertinent; but when I announce Capt. James Jones as the father of the *late Lady Cornwallis*, I hope I shall be permitted to proceed, and be honoured with attention; nor will his Lordship, I trust, be offended with any matter I shall here insert; for I pronounce that it is the pen of Truth which writes this relation of all my various and historical.

events, and I would rather burn the book than let it be stained with slander. What I here respectfully, and with diffidence relate, I assure myself his Lordship will not—cannot be offended at, but the contrary——

Curst be the lines, howe'er so well they flow,  
If they but make one single man my foe.

At the time I give this short detail of change and chances in Life's fickle dance, I must notice I have been for many years thrown so distant from my ancient friends and patrons, and my visits of late, when in London, were so limited that I know not whether Mrs. Jones (mother-in-law to Lord Cornwallis) is living or dead. However if that good Lady is now in our earthly region, I take the liberty to mention that the material part, such as the grand change in Captain Jones's latter fortune, I had from her own lips, or rather my mother was honoured with the relation.

Captain Jones was of a most accomplished turn of mind, to which was added every requisite to constitute the true gentleman—a strong understanding, wit, vivacity, and generosity; his person well made, smart, elegant, but not handsome. I cannot ascertain Capt. Jones and his Lady's mode and manners better than by referring the reader to Fielding's "Capt. Booth and his Amelia."

I could suppose Mrs. Jones the Amelia in every respect, and have my doubts whether Fielding did not take exact measure, and actually founded that novel on his knowledge of those two persons—Nay, I could almost swear it, for I never can believe that Captain Jones and his Lady would have been so very complaisant as to have studied their very foibles, and rush into scenes of distress, merely to imitate characters drawn by a novelist.

To these worthy persons the world was obliged for a son and daughter.—The son, Mr. James Jones, is still living near Whitehaven, his estate being in that part of the kingdom: Miss Jones, the daughter, was, when a child, of a remarkably quick genius, and possessed a theatrical turn; at eight years old could repeat all the speeches of Juliet with the utmost precision, and her father's judgment and attention made her quite correct. But Dame Fortune will have her frolics, and like a naughty woman, makes no scruple of introducing her daughter, *Miss*, on every occasion—Nay, so abandoned is she, that she forces her into the worst as well as the best company; and what is truly lamentable, no living mortal will ever hear of her death, for the wicked jade will live and triumph, while the world is a world; and she too often from her whims, by being an universal

plague, obliged Captain Jones to make the verge of the Court his most frequented walks—and of course, being often weary in body and mind in such walks of recreation and the reflections on this noon lounge, he would frequently sit down in a reverie on one of the benches in St. James's Park. Mrs. Chance (not her daughter) met him one morning, and suggested his resting himself on the same bench with General Skelton, who was then an entire stranger to him, of an ill tempered morose turn, like old Rueful in the Natural Son. This happened often, and by these interviews and chit chat they of course became mutually acquainted as Park-frequenters, to create an appetite for dinner, but no more; for the General never once asked him to his house, or formed any further intercourse. In the variety of ups and downs which Capt. Jones's spirit and humour occasioned, that hydra-headed monster Gaming, the origin of most human ills, precipitately urged him to the brink of ruin. His affairs grew so embarrassed, that he found it necessary to have a secret retirement, about eight miles from the metropolis, near Mortlake upon the Thames; and by art and disguise he found means to see his family: Some time elapsed, when after a long absence he was obliged to appear at St. James's;—being in a hurry to reach that place of royal protection, fearing



every instant a rude fisted bailiff, he was posting with the eyes of Argus to get within the sacred verge, when he was suddenly called on by an audible voice, which he took to be that of an acquaintance. He did not wish to be near, therefore made the best of his way, the other continuing in full speed after our Captain; fear did not add wings on this occasion, for he looked on this fatal demon as one that would so far prove a devil, as to plunge him into ruin and irretrievable distress. Finding it impossible to gain the wished for asylum, he determined to face his enemy, and wheeled about as in a posture of defence.—This short pause soon brought the parties to a state of parley. Jones, on looking stedfastly on his supposed enemy, knew him to be a gentleman of the law and of reputation, therefore said, “What is the reason, Sir, you hazard my resentment, by treating me in this rude and contemptible manner?”—“Why,” says the lawyer, “damn it, Jemmy! what are you afraid of?—I am Mr. Brown the attorney, and have had the pleasure of knowing you for some time.”——“True,” said the Captain, “but you are not at present one of the most pleasant acquaintance I could wish to meet in my present circumstances.”

*Mr. Brown.* “Dear Jones, you never were in a greater error, for before we part I will make

you confess I am not only equal, but superior to any friend you ever had in your life."

*Captain Jones.* "Indeed!"

*Mr. Brown.* "I will prove my assertion; therefore without apprehension or surprise let you and I adjourn to the next tavern, and the mystery shall be made perfectly clear."

The reader cannot doubt but on this mixture of alarm, doubt, fear, and apprehension, Jones's heart beat as quickly from curiosity as it had within a short space done with fear: In silence they entered the first house of public invitation that offered;—having procured a room, &c. after three or four hems, stirring the fire, and the lawyer guessing at the other's eagerness, he for once in his life omitted the law's delay, and proceeded to business.

*Brown.* "My dear Sir, to ease your suspense and bring the extraordinary cause of our meeting to that conclusion which tends to promote the success and happiness of your life, there is an unknown friend, anxious for your prosperity and for the welfare of your worthy wife and family; therefore let me know the amount that will make your affairs easy, and I have authority to assure you it shall be immediately done."

*Jones.* "I declare, Sir,—(here his features brightened)—it is a surprising as well as unexpected

proposal; but as I have dipt into fatal debts of honour, which I cannot as a gentleman screen, I fear when they are known, I shall forfeit all the noble intentions of my concealed patron."

*Brown.* "Fear not even that, for your patron's scrutinizing eye has made him well acquainted with every part of your misconduct, as well as your nobler and deserving qualities, and the latter in his judgment weighs so much superior, as to kick the beam with your errors; and I feel the happiness at this instant to have it in my power to convince you that you may be free from all terror or inconvenience during life."

*Jones.* "Good God! who can this paragon of friendship be!—or am I in a dream!"

*Brown.* Term it a dream;—and though a very pleasing one, you shall wake to the reality.—But now let me inform you—that General Skelton has done you this favour."

*Jones.* "General Skelton!—Why, except my chance meetings and conversations in the Park, I have little or no acquaintance with him."

*Brown.* "However it is true."

*Jones.* "Let me fly this instant to the General, to express my rapture, acknowledgments, and gratitude!"

*Brown.* Not so fast, Captain;—the General will never speak to you again."

*Jones.* "Good God! this is more incomprehensible than all the rest."

*Brown.* "Not at all strange, as he died last night."

*Jones.* "Last night! It is a romance!—an Arabian tale!"

*Brown.* "Ay, or a Mother Shipton's prophecy; and it needs not only your credibility, but more—all the fortitude, reason, and philosophy you can summon to your aid, for you must of necessity comply with, not a request only, but a demand."

*Jones.* "I hope, after this act of unexpected generosity, no tie is annexed to expect any compliance that may be a disgrace, and oblige me to refuse the benevolence he has honoured me with?"

*Brown.* "Of that you must be the judge; and to be plain, he had taken a great dislike to the name of Jones, and has ordered you to change it."

*Jones.* "If that be all, I will consent to be called any name he may have pleased to appoint, or that may have struck his fancy—but as Jones is my real name I must be obliged in all transactions to retain it still."

*Brown.* "Even that may be settled without difficulty, as acts of parliament can remove greater obstacles; and as you have borne the first surprise like a soldier, know, my dear friend, I made his will, and have for some time known the General's secret intentions and with sincere pleasure con-

gratulate you on being truly and *bona fide*, left sole heir to all his ample possessions; only in return (as he had not a son) that you by authority resign the name of Jones for Skelton."

Here the joy, the rapture of our captain may be imagined much easier than expressed, yet what follows will too fully prove how transitory are all human events, and the extraordinary fact pleaded with the feeling heart, a sufficient excuse for my insertion of it.

Jones immediately, with his good genius the honest attorney, hastened to Mrs. Jones, and after the forms of necessary preparation informed her of the glad tidings.—The fortunate Captain and his Lady went with Brown to view the New Palace in Henrietta-Street; from which place her impatience made her elope to see her friend Mrs. Wilkinson in Little Bedford-Street, to inform her of these wonderful and delightful particulars.

Miss Chudleigh, (the late Duchess of Kingston) at that time a toast in the fashionable circles, and who absolutely appeared as a naked Venus at a masquerade given some years since at Somerset-house, was a near-relation of General Skelton's: Being apprized of his death, she immediately ordered her carriage, and entered the house—secure in her sanguine expectations that not only part, but the whole of his estates were left at her will and disposal. When the time came for the u-

sual form of opening the will, and Jones was pronounced sole executor, the disappointment of Miss Chudleigh burst out in terms exceeding all bounds of delicacy—Her rage was excessive—(and indeed few would be found who would rejoice at the good fortune of another when opposed to their own loss of election; in short, unless being too violent from extreme of passion, her feelings must be allowed as the result of Nature)—she ironically declared the General was an old fool, and in his dotage; and that Jones and his wife were impudent, low upstarts, beneath her notice,—returned to her coach with a scornful quality tofs, and was drove furiously home to sigh, fume, and fret at leisure.—This was the exit of that ambitious, haughty dame.

Here with pleasure we behold, after the storms of adversity, a serene sky, and this accomplished amiable couple surrounded with every prospect of unbounded happiness; and promised addition of joys, even as their days did grow, with a son and daughter possessed of every endowment to make their mutual felicity complete.

The house in Henrietta-Street, (after the solemn and respectful interment of General Skelton) was soon new decked; they remained there till the summer had made some approach, it was then judged necessary on account of business, pleasure, and inclination, to visit his estates, left by the

General, in Cumberland. The son was at school, and the Captain, his Lady, and daughter, set off with that kind of self-satisfaction, which such a journey would naturally inspire; they safely arrived, and for about three weeks seemed not only in an enchanted spot, but a paradise; and, O delightful! that paradise their own. Unfortunately the Captain wilfully, and against the persuasion of his friends, would be let down to view a lead-mine, from which indeed he did return, but was instantaneously seized with a disorder of the most malignant and fatal kind, which in a few days baffled all skill, and he died in the arms of as sensible and endearing a wife as ever blessed a husband, or honoured the world. Her feelings on this occasion were poignant indeed; but by degrees her strength of mind rose superior to her grief—her loss was great and irrevocable! Fate had signed the warrant, and the dreadful stroke had been sustained. She curbed the sudden throbs and impulse of her heart—Nature had claimed her rights, and she had been obeyed. Mrs. Jones reflected, that though she had lost her husband, her protector; yet not many months before had this melancholy event happened in her book of fate, she had been left destitute, without friends, or means of support; and that a son and daughter, who would now attain rank and affluence, would then have been obliged to submit for their

existence to means below their birth, talents, and education.

Mrs. Jones's first cares were employed 'in the further improvement of her daughter's education, adding every accomplishment of art, to those blessings Nature had bestowed, with a profuse and bountiful hand on her darling child; a few years completed the pleasing task, when the mother introduced her bewitching and attractive daughter under her matron wing into the more elegant and polished scenes of life. Mrs. Jones was of a most lively and entertaining disposition; when once more returned to mix with the world, she was willingly visited by the gay, the good, and the great: amongst her round of acquaintance was the brave, the present Lord Cornwallis. He soon felt an impression not to be effaced; by the frequent conversations he had the happiness to enjoy with the lovely Miss Jones; nor was the young Lady less pleased with the great attention his Lordship honoured her with. His Lordship made proposals, which the mother's good sense approved, and her daughter's inclination and duty obeyed. Their souls were congenial——

And to his valour and his valiant parts,

Did she her soul and body consecrate.

The match soon took place to the joy and credit of all parties. Never did wedded felicity promise more lasting happiness——



One day past by, and nothing saw but love;  
 Another came, and still 'twas only love :  
 The suns were wearied out with looking on,  
 And he untired with loving.  
 He saw her ev'ry day, and all the day;  
 And ev'ry day was still but as the first,  
 So eager was he still to see her more.

When lo ! the dreadful, the unfortunate war  
 with America appeared ! and to her Ladyship in-  
 deed a view of horror. His Lordship, though all  
 the lover and affectionate husband, would not suf-  
 fer his honour to forget that he was a soldier, and  
 eager to hazard blood and life for his king and  
 country, he entreated not to be an idle spectator  
 in the time of danger, if his services could be ren-  
 dered acceptable, which was immediately granted;  
 and his Majesty conferred particular command and  
 honors on his Lordship—whose regiment was or-  
 dered into immediate service. Lady Cornwallis,  
 struck deep with grief, urged every plea that affec-  
 tion, reason, intreaty, and endearment, could sug-  
 gest to win his Lordship from his purpose; but  
 there he proved inexorable—he was indeed a  
 Hector, but she could not sustain the difficult firm-  
 ness of an Andromache. She even ventured to  
 try her influence over an high personage, a near  
 relation of his Lordship's\*, who moved with her  
 heart-felt affliction, begged her to be comforted,  
 with every assurance to accomplish if practicable,

\* The A—b—p of C—t—rb—y.

Lord Cornwallis's continued residence in England. This exalted person waited on the King, and painted her Ladyship's agony in such terms, that his Majesty could not refuse a request to such an incontestible proof of connubial love, and relinquished his intentions of Lord Cornwallis's going to America. Her Ladyship now felt secure of all her wishes; but how vain, how unsubstantial is human bliss!—for the instant he heard an item of what was done, and the source from whence it sprung, he flew like lightning to the throne, judged his honor, duty, was at stake, and his fame would be for ever tarnished, should he suffer such a weak womanish motive, (however affectionate) to over balance superior duty. His Majesty was convinced of the propriety and nobleness of his sentiments, and therefore his command was continued—to America he went.—As to the hour of separation, turn your light inward—eye, behold, and picture!—he relied on her Ladyship's strength of mind and pride for his honour to reconcile her poignancy of sorrow.

But love, almighty love, reigned in her distracted bosom!—With horror she sunk beneath the weight of grief!—her eager heart followed her other self—o'er leaped its bounds—and, beckoned by the attending spirit, her soul departed to the angels sure, and left her precious image deeply engraven in his Lordship's heart!

Here let me pause, and with truth declare, I could not relate this tragical event of the lady, by me so well remembered, without paying the tribute of a tear to her lovely and virtuous memory. Here arises an awful and an useful lesson for reflection, as it evinces that no rank whatever is exempt from misfortunes.—The gilded carriage too often carries a heavy mind within.—Where we have feared death, we have borne life away! and where we would be safe, *we perish!*

Since I wrote the foregoing history, I have been honoured with a letter from James Jones Skelton, Esq; of Pap Castle, near Cockermouth, in Cumberland, son to the Capt. Jones before mentioned.—I conjecture Pap Castle to have been the seat of good old General Skelton.

The season at Covent-Garden in 1753, closed on Saturday, May the 26th, with *Romeo and Juliet*; the last time Mrs. Cibber ever performed with her first *Romeo*, Mr. Barry, as she engaged at Drury Lane the season following: When Mr. Barry tutored and introduced Miss Nossiter, Wednesday, Oct. 10th, as before mentioned, in the character of *Juliet*, to the public, she was most favourably received. His occasional prologue that night contained the following compliment to Mrs. Cibber:

“ Who cou’d have thought that *Juliet* e’er cou’d prove,  
 “ False to her *Romeo*, faithless to her love;

“ She on whose voice the enraptur’d audience hung,  
“ Caught by th’ angelic music of her tongue.”

That season produced an ornament of private and public worth, Mrs. Gregory (now Fitzhenry): She first appeared on the 19th of January 1754, in the Princess Hermione; which character she repeated several nights. Miss Belamy, also returned that year from Drury-Lane, and made her *début* in Athenais.—In that Winter was the famous Dublin Riot. Saturday, February 2, 1754, Mr. Sheridan was dethroned. Mr. Barry, with Miss Nossiter, and Mrs. Gregory went to Ireland, in October, 1754.—Mr. Murphy acted Othello, Friday, October 18, 1754, at Covent-Garden, being his first appearance on any stage. Mrs. Woffington, and Mr. Sheridan were also engaged from Ireland, at Covent-Garden.—Mr. Sheridan retired in the Spring, and Barry returned to his old situation at that theatre, and continued there till the end of May, 1758.—Mr. Murphy deserted to Drury-Lane in 1755.—Mr. Mossop went that season to Ireland. Mr. Holland became a candidate for public favour, October 13, the same year; and the great riot, on account of the French Dancers, was on Saturday the 8th of November, 1755. The bill from the peculiar circumstances which it occasioned I here insert.

By His MAJESTY'S COMMAND.

## THEATRE-ROYAL, in Drury-Lane.

*This present Saturday, being the 8th of November, 1755, will  
be presented a Comedy, called*

## The Fair Quaker of Deal.

Beau Mizen, by Mr. WOODWARD.

Commodore Flip, by Mr. YATES.

Arabella Zeal, by Miss MACKLIN.

Belinda, by Miss HAUGHTON.

The Fair Quaker, by Mrs. DAVIES.

To which will be added, a New Grand Entertainment of DANCING, called

## THE CHINESE FESTIVAL.

Composed by Mr. NOVERRE.

The Characters by

Monf. DELAISTRE,

Sig. BALETTI, Mr. LAUCHERY,

|                   |                |                 |               |
|-------------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Mr. Noverre, Jun. | Mr. Shawforth, | Monf. L. Clert, | Mr. Hurst,    |
| Mr. Dianifon,     | Mr. Mathews,   | Mr. Harrison,   | Monf. Sarney, |
| Monf. St. Leger.  | Monf. Pochae,  | Mr. Granier,    | Mr. Walker,   |

Mrs. VERNON, Miss NOVERRE,

|             |              |               |                |
|-------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| Mr. Morris, | Mr. Ackman,  | Mrs. Noverre, | Mrs. Preston   |
| Mr. Booker, | Mr. Walker,  | Mrs. Gibbons, | Mad. Norend,   |
| Mr. Sturt,  | Sig. Pietro, | Mad. Charon,  | Mrs. Phillips, |
| Mr. Atkins, | Mrs. Addison | Mad. Nouflet, | Mrs. Lawton,   |

Little PEITRO, Miss NOVERRE,

|                 |                    |               |
|-----------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Master Simpson, | Master Hurst,      | Miss Popting, |
| Master Pope,    | Master Spillsbury, | Miss Simon,   |
| Master Blagden, | Miss Bride,        | Miss Heath,   |

|                |               |                |                 |
|----------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Mr. Scrate,    | Mr. Mare,     | Mr. Clough,    | Mrs. Hippisley, |
| Mr. Ackman,    | Mr. Vaughan,  | Mr. Allen,     | Mrs. Matthews,  |
| Mr. Jefferson, | Mr. Chamness, | Mr. Gray,      | Mrs. Simon,     |
| Mr. Burton,    | Mr. Bulbrick, | Mrs. Bradshaw, | And Miss Mills. |

*With New Music, Scenes, Machines, Habits, and other  
Decorations.*

Boxes, 5s.—Pit, 3s.—First Gal. 2s.—Upper Gal. 1s.

PLACES for the Boxes to be taken of Mr. VARNEY,  
at the Stage-door of the THEATRE.

No person can possibly be admitted behind the Scenes, or into the  
Orchestra.

*Nothing under full price will be taken during the whole Performance.*

VOL. I.

E

In 1756 Mr. Sheridan resumed his throne, after an abdication of two years, and continued till the end of the season, June, 1758.

These little anecdotes of the theatres I have merely given a place, to fill up the chasm of my life from Christmas 1752 ; nor would I have offered these notes here, as I intend a regular account of the success of every performer, their seasons, &c. in a publication that will not only contain much information, but be of real service to every young candidate for the sock or buskin, whether lady or gentleman, with the terms, advantages, and disadvantages, of all the principal play-houses, and circuits in the three kingdoms, and the particulars of my own theatres, from my commencing manager to the present date ; but without any idea of another subscription : therefore this little sketch is only done by way of supply for my fameness of life till November 1756, being entirely at home.

In 1755, my father began the dreadful experiment of exerting his supposed rights as minister of the Savoy ; and my constant attendance at the theatres was aided by a pocket full of money ; for soon after the *fatal* Marriage Act (as I may *truly* term it) took place ; my father judged he had a right to grant licences as usual ; and that it was a privilege annexed to the Savoy, as being extra-parochial. Those marriages brought in a

profusion of cash,—and instead of thinking of a rainy day, all was *rat, tat, tat*, at the street-door, and a variety of company.—Mr. Fox's popularity was then arrived at such an height, from the opposition he made to the Marriage Act, that his chariot was dragged along the streets by the populace for several days together—I have known as much crowding to hear my father preach a condemned sermon, as to get admittance on a fashionable night into a theatre.

The famous Doctor Killigrew, who had been many years minister of the Savoy, and all my father's predecessors had ever retained the power and right of granting licences for marrying from their own authority; and being extra-parochial, my father judged himself secure, and not within the reach of that severe act. The temple of Hymen being so seasonably opened for the relief of distressed lovers, marriage begot marriage;—Easter Day was crowded from eight till twelve—So many pairs were for the indissoluble knot being tied, that he might have made a fortune had he been blessed with patience and prudence, and been contented with publishing the bans of marriage only. Many persons came on a Sunday out of curiosity to hear such a long list of spinsters announced; all females of spirit engaging for the public good. The Parisian dames were not less

fearless on their late march to Versailles. Had he stuck to the bans only, he had puzzled the minister who framed the act.

And—"Wisely and slow; they stumble that run fast," might have been my father's motto. Debts, that had been the plague of our house were now almost unknown; and I must say in justice to Government, from my own knowledge, he had hints of the terrible consequences that would certainly ensue, and they wished him to drop a practice that must inevitably end in unavoidable ruin; he supposed those hints proceeded from their fears of his undoubted right, and that was the real cause of their lenity, without keeping in mind, that had it been so,——"Might will overcome Right."—So it proved, for the laws were put into immediate execution.

There was then, and I suppose there is still, a regular walk over the leads at the Savoy, through the kitchen of the prison to a private door into the chapel, where the condemned deserters were taken to hear service the Sunday before they were to be shot; and that road he took for the purpose of evading the King's messengers, supposed to be at times on the watch. One fatal Sunday morning a sudden alarm came that the officers were in the church.—A general panic ensued in our little family—My father sent word he was suddenly taken



III—nay, actually wanted me to read prayers in the clerk's desk; and fearing that a forcible attack would be made on our territories, from the the said gentlemen not meeting him in the church, he went down the garden to a gate that opened on the banks of the Thames; the tide happened to be low—his person unluckily was weighty, and he was aged about fifty-four—the steps were old—his foot slipped, and he fell very heavily against some logs of wood, such as are frequently seen floating on that river. He recovered himself, and kept close to the shore, which was very muddy and not public, till he got to Somerset-stairs, and there he immediately took a boat, and by one manœuvre or another got into Kent. For had he been seized, he must not only have suffered immediate confinement, but our marriage temple would inevitably have been at an end; therefore, in Kent he engaged one Mr. Grierfon, a clergyman, to perform the marriages, as his curate; but the licences he granted himself, thinking that Mr. Grierfon could not suffer for what he in his authority, as minister of the Savoy, was to be responsible for; but he was again in error. I must here take occasion to observe, that those marriages were not privately conducted as through fear, but quite the contrary; for my father publicly advertised his authority for so doing.

Mr. Vernon, of Drury-Lane Theatre, was at that time married by Mr. Grierson, to Miss Poitier of the same stage, and this circumstance has occasioned a thousand ill founded stories.—We all know, stories beget stories; but then we *make 'em*, and *when made we tell 'em*.

Mr. Vernon was banished the stage by the audience in London as an informer, in September 1756. The fact was simply this—Mr. David Garrick ever loved to be meddling; and though the Marriage Act concerned him not half so much as—whether the Emperor of Morocco's Sultana was the daughter of an Irish oyster woman or not;—yet still he would be busy.—Mr. George Garrick, attorney at law, his brother, had wedded a daughter of Mr. Carrington's, the King's messenger, and lived at Somerset House; on hearing of Mr. Vernon's being married, he (Mr. George Garrick) judged it a glorious opportunity to prove his vigilance, and Mr. Carrington's diligence in the service of Government; therefore they summoned Mr. Vernon to appear, and to give King David a satisfactory account of his marriage, as to the where and the when. For as to the tale of Vernon's being immediately after marriage tired of his Lady, it is merely a fictitious story.

Consent if mutual, saves the lawyer's fee,

Consent is law enough to set you free.—

Infidelity was so demonstrative on both sides, that the archbishop's licence would have had very little force in tying faster the marriage noose.—The lady liked a variety of husbands, and the gentleman a plurality of wives. They frequently changed their mates, till at last in Dublin, he became acquainted with Miss Macartney, who was well-bred, sensible, and handsome. She fixed the rambling rover, and with that amiable woman he lived happily, till death robbed the public of one, at least, of the most pleasing fingers the stage or Vauxhall could ever boast of.—He had a great advantage added to his taste and expression as a singer, as he possessed (what seldom accompanies vocal performers) strong abilities as an actor, which, aided by a pleasing person gave united force to his performances on every occasion. Mr. Vernon's assertion as to his being really married at the Savoy to Miss Poitier, Mr. David Garrick affected not to believe; but asked, who married them—if it was Doctor Wilkinson? Mr. Vernon, replied, “No,—the clergyman's name was Grierson.”—Mr. David Garrick still seemed not convinced, but insisted on seeing the certificate, which Mr. Vernon immediately obtained from Mr. Grierson, and gave it to Mr. David Garrick, who delivered it to Mr. Carrington; and Mr. Grierson was, in consequence, for—

ced out of his lodgings in open day, and committed to Newgate, tried, and condemned to transportation for fourteen years.—Mr. Vernon was subpoenaed to the trial, and was obliged to appear when called on. Mr. Grierfon had a large family in great want of subsistence—had no living, and nothing but the name of a poor clergyman for his support. In circumstances so desperate, he was glad to lay hold of any decent means for their support; and if the worst came to the worst, and the law should make a clergyman's joining people in wedlock a crime, which for ages had been a ceremony held in the first estimation in the minds of men, why he would reconcile himself to the consequence, well knowing that whatever land he should be thrown upon it could not be worse than this. After he was sentenced a subscription was raised; but I have been informed he died on the voyage—his family were with him; but my knowledge of him was so trifling, never having seen him except in those few months, that he was engaged as the marrying clergyman at the Savoy, that it is not likely I should be fully acquainted with particulars relative to that unfortunate clergyman.

My father in the intervening space, supplied by Grierfon, had so arranged his matters, as in his opinion would carry all before the wind; it

was not four weeks before he returned home. Mr. Brooks was his attorney, and the Reverend Mr. Brooks, brother to the attorney, who lately died at Norwich, was my father's curate for the public duties of the church. He was husband to Mrs. Brooks the authoress who favoured the world with *Rosina*, *Marian*, &c. A perpetual round of company went on, but the family string-purse was waining into a sudden decay with feasting the counsellors and lawyers who were to support his cause; and one and all assured him, over the flowing bowl, that victory was certain—but the event of war no mortal knows. Mr. Brooks being my father's officiate, an acquaintance with his family naturally occurred. Mrs. Brooks was his second wife—her mind was good, but her person much the contrary—she then had a literary turn, and her agreeable, sensible remarks, observations, and instructions, were given with affability, and proved to me of great advantage.

At her house I frequently met with Mr. Quin, who was using his interest with Mr. Rich to produce Mrs. Brooks's Tragedy of Virginia, which was very properly rejected, as it was not only a very poor play, but one on the same subject, by Crofts at Drury-Lane, and another by Moncrief at Covent-Garden, had been performed in 1753.

and 1754, and neither of them attended with success; but Crofts's was by much the best.

Mrs. Woffington and Mrs. Elmy were also her visitors. Mrs. Elmy knowing my inclination for the stage, corrected many of my faults; her understanding was allowed by all to be very extensive. She is still living, and now must be greatly in the vale of years; and I beg leave to assure her, that wheresoever she dwells, I have not forgot her lessons on pronunciation, manners, and characters. Nor can her merit in Octavia, Lady Grace, or Mrs. Marwood, be ever erased from my mind. Mrs. Cholmondley, sister to Mrs. Woffington, was often there; but hearing I had dared at that time to imitate Mrs. Woffington, Mrs. Brooks never had influence to get me into any degree of favour with either of those ladies. I twice or thrice visited Mrs. Woffington, in York-buildings, with Dr. and Mrs. Brooks, but it was a forced civility in compliance to them.

Mrs. Woffington had conceived a disgust not to be removed, and it was rooted even to hatred, as will hereafter appear. It must be observed, that thirty years ago, mimicking of the performers had not been attempted at the theatres, except by Mr. Garrick, and that when he was at Goodman's Fields, and by Mr. Foote at the Hay-Market. For

when Mr. Foote acted at Covent-Garden, he left out that part of his performance, and the Hay-Market was the spot for him to be the hero of each tale, and where he shone in a conspicuous light to every advantage. His mimicry at Covent-Garden, consisted of a whimsical teaching of stage pupils, the Puppets—the Chevalier Taylor and a Doctor Heberden, two very public characters, and well known by every body.

I was the first that ever gave an entertainment of that kind at Drury-Lane or Covent-Garden Theatres; since which, it has been so often well and ill attempted, that though the actors and actresses naturally do not approve of the practice, nor admire the talents of such an exhibitor, yet it does not by any means create the spleen and unhappiness it did formerly; for the frequent exertion of such comic-powers certainly have taken off that edge, which thirty years ago was judged most cutting, and not to be endured. The peculiarities of Mr. Delane, an actor of the first rank, were so severely pointed out by Mr. Garrick, in the character of Bayes, that it is said to have actually occasioned Mr. Delane's flying to the bottle for relief to his hurt mind; he continued to use it with such excess that he never was himself again.

In other men we faults can spy,  
And blame the mote that dims their eye;

Each little speck and blemish find,  
To our own stronger errors blind."

Mr. Delane is mentioned as a gentleman of family in Ireland, of liberal education, and great qualifications for the stage.

Mr. Garrick at the solicitation of his friends—remonstrances of the actors, (without whose assistance he could not live, for what avails a general without an army,) and from full conviction his own merit required not such aid as mimicry, as it was merely a trifling feather in his cap of fame; he, for once in his life did a generous action, and gave up what he no longer wanted.

But to return again to my father, who was at home fairing most sumptuously every day on the gleanings of the marriage harvest, but with very little attention or anxiety paid to the evil hour; and I was in my glory, full of feasting, company, personating a hero at night in my own play-house, or visiting one of the theatres, and sometimes both. If I did reflect, it was very briefly—I argued thus, that if the worst should happen, I could be a great actor in time, and did not doubt but that I should be a manager in reality——

O glorious thought, I did enjoy it,  
Tho' but in fancy:  
But after sunshine comes a storm.

My father having persisted in the pursuit of his



golden vision, and being of an intrepid spirit, and, as he thought, secure of victory on the day of trial. The week previous to it, in July 1756, he visited several of his friends, and on the Sunday evening, attended by two or three of his intimates, took an affectionate leave of my mother and myself, and delivered himself up at Newgate, as he had given notice, that he was ready to abide trial the next sessions, which was to begin on the Monday following; and on the Friday in the same week came on his dreadful day—a dreadful day indeed was it to my disconsolate mother, whose features indicated a mind replete with woe. The trial of my father was not a scene for me to be present at; but I remember to have heard he urged, in his defence, that he, “had been pursued with unrelenting vengeance.”

As he was chaplain to his Majesty, had they been determined on no other act of severity, they certainly for his hostile demeanor in defiance of Government, would have taken his place of chaplain from him. However it is too well known, whatever he might think as to his rights and privileges, that the court found him guilty of the offence; and it is as well known, that though the public at large wished him well, and detested the act in force, yet most of his reasonable friends thought he would at last suffer the consequences announced

by law, by which he was sentenced to fourteen years transportation.

This was a stroke he most severely felt, for it struck at his affections, his pride, and his false dependence, which was the most mortifying of all : for the condolence of what we suffer from consequent effects and causes, clears in some degree the rugged paths of Misfortune ; but what our own wisdom fails in, when in opposition to the opinion of wiser heads, makes the disappointment terribly mortifying—and distressing indeed !—The general or admiral, who on a great undertaking does not prove victor, however able in judgment and valour, seldom or ever escapes censure. My father therefore fell an unfortunate victim to the memorable Marriage Act. His purse was drained to the last for the purchase of being promise-crammed by the alluring and flattering hopes given him by the gentlemen of the law.

It now became an act of necessity for the public and his friends to be stretched to the extent of their humanity, to equip and support him as a gentleman for his voyage to America. His connections were considerable, consequently his recommendations were such, as would doubtless have placed him in a light of admiration as a man of the gospel, had he arrived and lived in that country. His qualifications as a scholar, and as

an orator, with the extraordinary law that had occasioned his removal there, must in all probability have made amends for his sufferings, and have raised him to the highest estimation. It was after some consultation determined, as soon as he was well and happily situated in America, that my mother and myself should go after him.

The following petition, which I now present to the reader from his own hand writing, was delivered by my mother herself to his Majesty King George the Second, but without effect or notice. The Secretary of State would not assist—Petitions were hackneyed then as now, and deemed troublesome intrusions on the time of a politician.

It is seldom the *fortified breast-work* of the Minister is the friend of Affliction, and where pale Poverty is the suppliant, I fear too often his *heart* is callous and proof against every attack, that may be attempted by the feeble efforts of Mercy or Charity; therefore to trace entrance there for a needle's point to pierce its feelings is barely possible.

TO THE

King's most Excellent Majesty,

THE HUMBLE PETITION OF

JOHN WILKINSON,

MOST HUMBLY SHEWETH,

“ **T**HAT so long since as the year 1725, your  
 “ petitioner hath been minister of your Majesty's  
 “ royal precinct of the Savoy.

“ That your petitioner always apprehending  
 “ and believing the Savoy to be a Royal Exempt,  
 “ and as such, not subject to the ordinary of the  
 “ diocese, so he hath occasionally, during the time  
 “ of his being minister of the Savoy, solemnized  
 “ marriages in the chapel there, by virtue of his  
 “ own licences.

“ That in the 26th year of your Majesty's reign  
 “ an act was passed to prevent clandestine marriages; it enacts, “ *That if any person shall solemnize marriages without publication of bans, unless licence of marriage be first had and obtained from some person or persons having authority to grant the same, every person knowingly and wilfully so offending, shall be deemed and adjudged to be guilty of felony, and be subject to be transported for fourteen years.*

“ That your Majesty’s petitioner from the  
 “ hopes that his mistake was not criminal, volun-  
 “ tarily surrendered himself to take his trial, upon  
 “ a charge of having acted against that statute ;  
 “ but having been convicted at the last Sessions,  
 “ is liable to be transported for the term of four-  
 “ teen years, and by this conviction has been de-  
 “ prived of that office in the Savoy, and his wife  
 “ and family, thereby, now in the utmost distress.

“ That your Majesty’s petitioner, as he inno-  
 “ cently pursued the example of his predecessors,  
 “ so from your Majesty’s paternal goodness, he  
 “ humbly supplicates your Majesty’s pardon, to  
 “ prevent a clergyman of the church of England,  
 “ who for more than thirty years has enjoyed  
 “ other preferments in the church, from being ba-  
 “ nished his native country, and who has been  
 “ universally confessed to be a faithful, loyal, and  
 “ useful subject,

“ And your Majesty’s petitioner,

“ as in duty bound shall ever pray,

“ JOHN WILKINSON.”

- The time for his departure was early in March, 1757, and the last meeting between father, mother, and son, was, in that most dreadful of all places, Newgate! We who had for so many years moved in a different sphere, and who were more than commonly united—a description of it

must here be omitted ; but if the sensible feeling mind will take a short pause, and honour the ashes of the dead with a moment's reflection, and a tear of pity, it will be only paying a tribute due to humanity and mercy ; and from whence ideas will flow in painting the result of such a tragical, affecting scene, as imagination will easily describe much stronger than any words can possibly express. For Apelles, when he placed his hero in an agony of grief, cast a mantle over his face, thereby indicating that strong passions were more naturally supplied from the glow of ideas, than from the pencil of the artist, however fine or excellent.

My dear, benevolent, indulgent, gracious, and loving parent, farewell ! May your last blessing procure me, at least, a small portion of your wishes for my short remains of life.

My father, with every comfortable necessary as a gentleman—all his valuables, clothes, his writings, his bureau, cash, with recommendatory letters, &c. set sail for America ; but was previously obliged to pay thirty pounds, as a perquisite for freedom—a tax on misfortune—as a tribute to the hungry commanders of such vessels. But it seemed as if the Almighty arm had purposely interfered, to prevent the disgrace of any one of his Holy Servants here on earth landing as a banish-

ed criminal in a foreign clime, for only performing that ceremony, instituted in his Holy Writ, as a sacred band of unity between those whom inclination had led to his sacred altar, therein obeying the impulse of nature, ordained and sanctified by GOD himself.

When they reached the Downs, they could not proceed, the winds would not permit them; from thence we received a letter containing an account of my father being but very indifferent, as the gout had made a severe attack in his stomach; a complaint with which he was every year more or less afflicted in that dangerous seat of its residence. They were driven by stress of weather into Plymouth, where his enemy, *the gout*, assisted by the severity of the elements, seized this dreadful opportunity to league with Death, and violently assaulted a mind and body, already loaded with anguish, affection, and affliction, and by finding himself bereft of that assistance and tenderness from those he sighed for, but sighed in vain!—the merciless invaders proved too mighty for his fortitude—the noble cordage cracked and broke! Grim Death sat triumphant over his conquered manes!

Then my father's soul might smilingly exult after all his sufferings here on earth, and as ascending to his God, rejoicingly cry out "O Death!"

where is thy sting?—O Grave! where is thy victory?

Before the end of this tragical story, I must relate that the Captain of the vessel had my father privately interred at Plymouth, from whence, as fatality seemed to pervade the whole mysterious event, on the Captain's returning to his ship, his boat was overset by a rough sea, the crew were saved, but the Captain perished.

With one Winter's brush  
Thus was I left open, bare  
For every storm that blow'd.—  
Me to bear that—  
Who never knew but better—was some burthen.

When the Marriage Act took place in 1754, the Duchy of the Savoy certainly was in a lawless state, as acts of parliament have passed within these fifteen years to put it under the power of Government. I recollect several instances—two will explain as well as five hundred. From the Savoy-steps in the Strand, on to Duchy-Lane, which is the *last* turning before you come to Somerset-House, down to the water-side, and next the water on to Somerset-stairs, (that used to be for watermen) is all the Savoy precincts. I remember that a Mr. Wood, a timber-merchant, purchased the house next door to ours, near the Savoy water-gate, and placed in it one Pugh, who belonged to



Covent-Garden Theatre, to take care of it, but Wood neglecting at the time to put furniture into the premises; when he (Wood) wanted his house, Pugh not only refused, but kept possession of it for himself, and Wood could not get any remedy at law. The reason I do suppose was, that no original right could be proved by him. Pugh after living in this house for some years, sold it to one Meredith, a Welchman; and Taffy well knowing how to turn the penny, even stripped the lead off the roof of the house, which he afterwards covered with boards, and tarred them over. The lead I believe was the property of Government, for it reached over that, a part of my father's house, and some of the Savoy prison.

A man whose name was Waller, kept a public house near the Savoy-square; he heard of a house being empty next the Savoy water-gate, where Mrs. Porter, a celebrated actress in Cibber's time had lived. The house had been left, and stripped of all the furniture.—Breaking a lock was a service of danger; therefore this Waller, who kept the futtling-house near the barracks; with a ladder fixed against it from a lighter, mounted and got in with ease at the old balcony, and by the same means in the night, conveyed chairs, &c. into the house; took off the lock on the inside, and became so dexterous thereby, as to be firmly established in

the possession of it.—For while furniture was in the house, and that furniture *his*, the house was also his property as long as he dwelt in it, or had his goods there—Such was the unruly state of the Savoy.

Waller was still more lucky—for one Burdet, a very rich old German, I dare say near eighty years of age, who walked the streets in rags, and was a picture of misery equal to Otway's Witch, for "his eyes with burning rheum were scald and red, and went about picking up dry sticks and mumbling"—would not allow himself the necessaries of life—was filthy in every sense of the word. This man purchased for a very trifling sum of money this same house of Waller, and which the old man expected to sell for a good round sum, in comparison to what he had given; but first, he had placed in it a broken bedstead, a chair, &c. More luxuries he needed not, as the cold earth was often his bed, and water his draught of refreshment.

He had been missing for several days; at last Waller was the lucky man to obtain the house once more, for, after repeated rappings at the door, he burst it open, and found this old unaccountable character, this poor, *good*, miserable, extraordinary being, (for tho' he grudged himself food and raiment, yet he had a heart open to another's misery; I have known him do great acts of kindness for my

father) laying dead, and by appearance had been so for some days, and in all probability for want of common cheer and a little assistance. Now Waller was so lucky by this accident, as again to become the possessor, and the house since that time (about 1751) went gradually down from tenant to tenant, according to the Savoy law; and was burnt to the ground the very week before I went to London, in the summer 1785.—The house above it, which I mentioned before, as having fallen into the hands of one Meredith, suffered by the conflagration. All the large shops in the Strand, from the Surry steps to Somerset-gate, were all sold or taken by surprize, time out of mind. Any old person in that district will confirm what I relate as the words of truth, though they may seem bordering on the marvellous.

The melancholy account of my father's death was soon conveyed to us, and was submitted to with resignation; then to think of means for subsistence for my afflicted mother and myself. No restoration of the effects, which my father died possessed off, could ever be had. As the following lines in a letter some time after from my mother, (so long as January, 1768) will elucidate—

“Hearing the vessel was returned from America—I sent Mr. Philips, a clerk of your father's, to the Captain of the ship, who was

“astonished at the demand upon him for effects,  
“which he plainly demonstrated to be left in  
“Maryland.—This enquiry cost me ten shillings  
“and sixpence.—All I can now do is to get a let-  
“ter conveyed to the merchants abroad to un-  
“dertake a restitution.”

Which application ended in fruitless and additional expence.—

Yet in this destitute, forlorn, and miserable state was she left to support and maintain, not only herself, but me. It was in the time of the war with France.—Captain Jones immediately offered to procure me a commission in the army—Lord Forbes the same; but my own wise head led to higher views—no less than Monarchy itself. In short the stage was my throne of adulation; I therefore rejected their offers, which to my mother gave a heart felt pang; as we were really reduced to live by the sale of such articles of remaining luxury as could produce subsistence, and which enabled us to continue an appearance fit to be received at those tables we were invited to; and here let me remark, that a Lord may dine in a dingy dress, and it is genteel, fashionable, and elegant; but let the needy man set down to table, and a Lord by chance should come into the room, the master and mistress of the ceremony do not know how to help or look at the poor guest, for

fear of disgracing themselves, yet at the same time wish to convey an idea to every one present that they are amiable and beneficent; and that really they have put themselves out of their way in order to support the pauper by giving him a meal.

My mother's friends were capable and willing to afford every support to enable her to keep up a decent appearance, both at home and abroad, by a respectable assistance; which, when so bestowed, will ever gladden the oppressed mind; but not when offered as a supercilious gift—as who should say, “I am Sir Oracle!”—“How good I am!”

*Lear.*—“Take physick, Pomp!

“Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,

“That thou may'st cast the superfluous to them,

“And shew the heav'ns more just.”

These kindnesses, assisted by our false, crippled friend, *Hope*, who leads astray the old, the young, the gay, the lively, the rich, and the poor with her delusions, lulled us for a while into a stupid lethargy. At length we were suddenly aroused, by its being seriously pointed out by Mr. Jonas Hanway and others, that they could not help being angry that a lad between seventeen and eighteen, not bred to any business, and whose education had been shamefully neglected, should by his having been accustomed to indulge his own self-will and pleasure, refuse to receive a commission; espe-

cially as I ought to have rejoiced, and have been ready to have accepted of a genteel competency, instead of idly preferring hanging on a mother for subsistence, who was herself dependent on others for her support. These hints to a young self-conceited mind, are always received by such unfortunate pets, as the effects of insolent authority and impertinence.

As I had not then actually experienced the rod of affliction or necessity, I did not, or would not perceive the rapid strides I was taking for my destruction. There are many situations, such as Conway Sands, Lincoln Marsh, &c. where, on a summer's eve it may be pleasant to walk and view the prospects round ; but if thoughtlessly the proper time for returning is neglected—what had the minute before appeared pleasing and delightful is surrounded with water—ingulfed and swallowed up : reflection then comes too late.—This is exemplified by a passage in King John :

“ For in a night, the best part of my power,

“ As I upon advantage did remove,

“ Were in the washes, all unwarily,

“ Devoured by the unexpected flood.”

From my then situation may youths take a lesson, and

“ Learn to be wise from other's harm,

“ And they will do full well.”

Though I had not seemingly attended to Mr.

Jonas Hanway's authoritative lecture and remonstrance; yet conviction inwardly and sullenly told me, that something must be done. The stage, my thoughts had not forgot, though I dared not avow my inclination for it, fearing my patrons and mother would not prefer my being a player to that of an officer; and what I dreaded still more, was my hearing a mean opinion delivered of my education, and want of capability as a servant of the muses. However, unknown to them, I plucked up courage, and waited on Mr. Rich, and after rehearsing several speeches from Richard III. he behaved very familiarly, and desired me to hear HIM *act Richard III.* and, his acting over, I was without loss of time enrolled on the list of his pupils. After some time he taught me a trumpery speech, for to make my appearance as one of the three Ambassadors in the Humourous Lieutenant; but after the honour of attending his levees, having free admission behind the scenes, and receiving a few lessons from him, he, to my astonishment, declared I was incapable of becoming an actor. But whether the fault lay in the preceptor, or in the stupidity of the pupil, is difficult to determine; but so it was—and my only consolation was constantly attending behind the scenes, where I by mere accident grew familiarly

acquainted with Mr. Shuter, the only one who took the least notice of me.

I lived on hopes, however, that Mr. Rich would ere long perceive my genius, which I assured myself was beyond compare ; and soon after, on my repeating the first speech of Richard III. one morning in the exact tone and manner of old Rich, he seemed delighted, and I judged all would soon terminate in the accomplishment of my wishes ; but the following odd accident frustrated all my hopes, and I innocently incurred the fixed displeasure of Mr. Rich—My ideal opinion of greatness ouzed away, and what sense I had formerly possessed was now returning, with a melancholy prospect before me ;—even that of existence stared at me with an aspect that struck with every mortifying and humiliating sensation. This total overthrow to all my expectations, was occasioned by Mrs. Woffington. The cause was as follows :—One day my old friend Captain Forbes had invited me to dine with him at the Bedford Arms, and after a choice dinner, with plenty of good wine, &c. the Captain said, “ Tate, we will go to the play ; (and added) that he wished to go behind the scenes :” But as I went there only on sufferance, I told him it was not in my power to oblige him.—“ If so” (said my friend George) we will not separate ; for I will treat you to the boxes.”



Being jolly with the bottle, I assented, and when arrived at the theatre, I could not prevail on him to sit any where but in the stage-box. He was in full guard regimentals—myself by no means dressed fit to appear as his companion; but as he persisted, and led the way—I followed, and in the front of his Majesty's stage-box we were seated; and no more strange than true, the lower sides exhibited a beggarly account of empty boxes, and only a few persons were scattered in the front ones; not an extraordinary circumstance to relate then of an unfashionable night at Covent-Garden Theatre. The play was *The Confederacy*.

Being in such a conspicuous situation, the eyes of the performers from behind the scenes were instantaneously attracted, on beholding a poor young lad—a mere dependent—(skulking nightly behind the curtain) placed in a stage box—they were, therefore, astonished at my audacity in usurping and possessing such a particular seat of distinction—and a creature, too, that was destitute, and soliciting for bread; they naturally concluded I had gained admittance by an order, and taken such a place by way of ignorant and impudent bravado, the which deserved chastisement,—they sent and spoke to Mr. Rich, and it was agreed, that Wilkinson should be instantly ordered from

his improper situation. A messenger was sent to put this mandate from Mr. Rich in full force—the box-keeper came to me; and Captain Forbes warm with his wine, and the insult offered to his friend, soon convinced the official messenger of his mistake, and the box-keeper was sent back to assure Mr. Rich, that Mr. Wilkinson was seated there by proper authority; as Captain Forbes, who was well known by being a constant box attendant at their theatre, had paid ten shillings for admittance. This I was well informed, caused a general green-room laugh of contempt, at the expence of the poor poverty-struck gentleman in the stage box: But unfortunately Mrs. Woffington, who acted Clarissa, having been frequently told that I was remarkable for *taking her off*, (as the phrase was, and is) came close to the stage-box, finishing her speech with such a sarcastic sneer at me, as actually made me draw back.—My unfortunate star sure was then predominant, for at that moment a woman of the town, in the balcony above where I was seated, repeated some words in a remarkable shrill tone, which occasioned a general laugh; like electricity it caught Mrs. Woffington's ear, whose voice was far from being enchanting; on perceiving the pipe squeek on her right hand, and being conscious of the insult she had then given apparently to me, it struck her comprehension

so forcibly, that she immediately concluded I had given the retort upon her in that open and audacious manner, to render her acting and tone ridiculous to the audience, as returning contempt for her devilish sneer. She again turned and darted her lovely eyes, tho' assisted by the furies, which made me look confounded and sheepish; all which only served to confirm my condemnation. When the scene was finished, and she had reached the green-room—she related my insolence in such terms, as rendered me a subject of abuse, contempt, and hatred, with all the company; but of that circumstance I was quite ignorant:—at the instant I had, it is true, observed, to my mortification, Mrs. Woffington looked angry, but could not divine the real cause.

The noon following, when I attended Mr. Rich's levee, I was kept in waiting a considerable time; but as that was, and is the too common fate of distressed dependence—Patience was my friend and companion;—at last Mrs. Woffington passed through the room, where I was thus humiliated, and without a word, curtsy, or bow of her head, proceeded on to her sedan, from which she as haughtily returned, and advancing towards me with queen-like steps, and viewing me most contemptuously, said,—“ Mr. Wilkinson, I have made a visit this morning to Mr. Rich, to com-

mand and to insist on his not giving you any engagement whatever—no, not of the most menial kind in the theatre.—Merit you have none—charity you deserve not,—for if you did my purse should give you a dinner—your impudence to me last night, where you had with such assurance placed yourself, is one proof of your ignorance ; added to that, I heard you echo my voice when I was acting, and I sincerely hope in whatever barn you are suffered as an unworthy stroller, that you will fully experience the same contempt you dared last night to offer me.” With a flounce and enraged features, without waiting or permitting me to reply, she darted once more into her chair. I really was so astonished, frightened, and bewildered, that I knew not how to act or think, but was relieved from longer suspense and tedious waiting by a message from Rich, intimating that he could not see me at his levee, either that day or in future, or listen to any engagement whatever ; for my behaviour was too gross and rude to be justified, and I must immediately depart ; but the person added, I might continue the liberty of the scenes during the season, with this proviso, that I should not on any account, take the freedom to speak to Mr. Rich.—I wished not, nor had the power to make an answer.

Provisions were short at home—my good mo-

ther's poverty increased :—One good advantage this distress produced was, that what I should have devoured *that* day, with my noddle full of vanity, was reserved for the *next*—my stomach being quite satisfied with grief, shame, and vexation ; poverty pursuing my steps. My mother of course execrated Rich and Woffington—wept over her darling boy, and flew to that Refuge, which she often declared always afforded her support, and had never forsaken her, even when sinking under the greatest affliction ; and that Refuge was a constant address to the Deity, and a trust in his Divine mercy. However I would not give up the play that night, nor in a pet resign my permission of being behind the scenes ; but the theatre was no longer that earthly paradise I had formed, for the mist was removed, and I saw actors, actresses, and myself in a different mirror, which convinced me what we all really were.

When I went into the green-room, an universal laugh of contempt ensued—Woffington, the queen bee of the hive, was there—I had disturbed and offended her Majesty ; and therefore all her faithful servants, bee-like, joined to sting me, except Mr. Shuter, who saw my distress and good naturedly took me by the hand—led me to his dressing-room, and desired me not to be cast down ; but observed I must not enter the green-room.

again, as they were one and all determined on my banishment. In such a situation, it will naturally be conceived I had a claim to pity and some little protection, and that players must of course be the most cruel of all people.

But I must in justice clear them from that imputation, as they are in general benevolent, and always ready to relieve the unfortunate; but I had in their opinion, then, forfeited all title to commiseration and assistance; as they felt themselves much hurt with the constant accounts they heard of my rendering most of the leaders in their profession ridiculous by my freedom of mimicry, and the open and audacious affront which they believed and assured themselves I had given to Mrs. Woffington; which could not be removed or palliated. Mrs. Woffington being generous, familiar, and friendly to the comedians, it was not surprising that they should obey her mandate, which, added to their own supposed wrongs, agreed with their inclinations; therefore, as a common cause, they all concluded such treatment to me, was only inflicting strict justice on an ignorant, pretending upstart.

I own I often at that time practised this said talent, and had frequently set the table in a roar, but that without any design or intention of injury to any one. The fact lies plainly here—we can all laugh

at each other's foibles and peculiarities ; but think our own are not perceived, or if perceived, should be overlooked.—If to do, were as easy as to say, what ought to be done, and such a mode was adopted, adieu all murdering of reputations, and private peace, that gorgeous meal for Malignity. I confess, as a joker, to have been free, but never stabbed in the dark ; and I do also profess, I kindly set down my own satire as harmless, and from my heart most nobly and truly have forgiven injuries, but *fear* I, shall never bring myself to esteem those who ignorantly and wickedly have presented me in colours most disgusting, and that in a point wherein they were so bewildered and *egregiously* mistaken, that the true foundation of the story, so far from shame or disgrace, had *honour* and real humanity for its supporters. At my last moments, if able to articulate, I shall not, even in the agony of death, deviate from this solemn oath and awful asseveration. I have not inserted this on *my own account* ; but as incumbent on myself to clear the aspersed, the unfortunate, and miserable ; and I could wish my avowal recorded in the golden letters of truth over my grave. *Where nothing—no nothing, can touch me further!*

It is too often demonstrative, and much to be lamented, that persons of distinguished rank and pride, can forget their true dignity, and, instigated

by the appetite for scandal, yield and mingle with the vulgar herd, and on a bare supposition meanly stoop to throw poisoned arrows on the defenceless ; who, if they themselves at that moment were reminded of the crimes and misdemeanors of their own families, would shudder and shrink appalled. —Go, bid them laugh at that !

Verily we all can ken many of such description ; but as they are numerous, there is not any occasion for any one to put on the cap—*unless it fits*. He who cannot rise superior to calumny may be a good man, but never a contented one. I will quit this intrusive matter, and calmly observe to anonymous vipers—“Malice scorned, puts out “itself ;—but, argued, gives a kind of credit to a “false accusation.

But I must return to Mrs. Woffington, and be her theatrical herald and faithful chronologer. She ever had a train of admirers ; she possessed wit, vivacity, &c. but never permitted her love of pleasure and conviviality, to occasion the least defect in her duty to the public as a performer. Six nights in the week has been often her appointed lot for playing without murmuring ; she was ever ready at the call of the audience ; and though in the possession of all the first line of characters, yet she never thought it improper or a degradation of her



consequence, to constantly play the Queen in Hamlet, Lady Ann in Richard III. and Lady Percy in Henry IV. Parts which are mentioned as insults in the country, if offered to a lady of consequence.

Read this, ye heroes and heroines!—She also cheerfully acted Hermione, or Andromache; Lady Pliant, or Lady Touchwood; Lady Sadlife, or Lady Dainty; Angelica, or Mrs. Frail; and several others alternately, as best suited the interest of her manager.

At nine years old, I became acquainted with Mrs. Barrington of Covent-Garden Theatre, by being at the same school at Wandsworth with Mr. T. Hale, her son by her first husband, Mr. Hale the actor. I had for some years been kindly received by her, and annually at the time of her benefit, traversed from St. Paul's to Westminster to dispose of tickets, which canvass generally proved productive; but now the child of sorrow, and having incurred the hatred of Mrs. Woffington, to whom Mrs. Barrington was a close intimate, even to adulation, she withdrew her courtly smile, glance, or nod, from poor Tate, who she was once proud of acknowledging.

One evening, some few weeks after my late mentioned disgrace, Mrs. Woffington was acting Lady Dainty, in the Double Gallant—Mrs. Bar-

rington, Sylvia; Mrs. Vincent, Clarinda. I ventured after much hesitation, to say to Mrs. Barrington, I thought Mrs. Woffington looked beautiful—Mrs. Barrington tossed up her head and said, That was no news, as she looked so every night; at which she and Mrs. Vincent laughed:—this occasioned Mrs. Woffington to turn her head, and condescendingly ask, What they were smiling at? Mrs. Barrington replied, that the young man was saying, that Lady Dainty looked beautiful that night, and added, she had told him, there needed not that information, as she always looked so.—Mrs. Woffington viewing me disdainfully, cried, Poor Creature!—O God! says I, what shall I do for bread!—I had better exhibit in a barn, but am not sure if I can even get that situation.—My only comfort was my acquaintance with the facetious Ned Shuter; it grew soon to a strong friendship, for he took me to all his parties, and that made my time glide more pleasantly. I mentioned his kindness to my confidant Captain Forbes; and also informed him what excellent company Shuter was—He said he looked upon his civility shewn to me as an obligation to himself. He was then appointed on the command of the Savoy Guard, and he desired I would constantly be with him, and present a general invitation to Mr. Shuter; the compliment Shuter seemed highly pleased with, accepted

of the favour offered him, and went with me there very often.

We had many pleasant parties; Captain Forbes and Shuter grew very intimate. Shuter's talents were wonderfully shrewd, quick, sensible, and to a degree highly entertaining.—He was no man's enemy but his own. One evening over our bottle Shuter told me, that his benefit was to be on the 28th of March, and he would *get up* (never performed at Covent-Garden) the farce of *Lethe*, and would play Mr. Garrick's character of Lord Chalkstone; and I should represent the Fine Gentleman, a difficult part for any actor, and at that time playing by Woodward at Drury-Lane, who was in his zenith, and was certainly the most improper character for *me* of any in the whole round of the drama. But most young actors think if it be a principal one, the business is done; for it is a rule fixed in the theatrical corps, that parts make the actor—not the actor the parts. They will also urge, that managers can always by such partial means and subterfuge create as many great performers as they please; but a very little reflection would evidently contradict it, to the mortification of most of them; because at that rate, the loss of a grand actor or actress could always be supplied by the managers: so, if their doctrine be true, the favourites of the public should not at any place

trifle with the manager, as according to that supposition, the performer may foolishly and wantonly quit a good situation, and the manager from his own creative quality, as the carpenter of genius, could mould and chisel any block to supply such a loss; but true genius will shew itself in the slightest character. Nor did Shakespear ever write a Westmoreland or Northumberland, without strict attention to their true quality. Now and then actors, nay, even the ladies, mistake their talents; nor was Mr. Garrick exempt, who acted Lord Townly and Sir Harry Wildair, Othello, Lord Foppington, Pierre, &c. all unfit for him, and they were judged so by the Town.—Mr. Mossop, the West Indian; Mr. Ryan, Varanes; Mrs. Cibber, Lady Townly and Lady Brute; Mr. Barry, Richard; Mrs. Clive, Zara; Quin, Chamon and Young Bevil, and all this by their own choice; therefore, if such persons of judgment and experience were led away by their performing characters unfit for them, it is not to be wondered at that I, young and inexperienced, should attempt the Fine Gentleman.

However, advertised for it I was; and away went Shuter and myself to Monmouth Street, where for two guineas, I was equipped with the loan of a heavy, rich, glaring, spangled, embroidered velvet suit of clothes, and in this full dress, fit for the King

in Hamlet, with my hair in papers, did I advance with timid steps; through crowds of people; for Shuter's popularity had brought the whole London world. A large amphitheatre was built on the stage, numbers were lying on the ground; and only one entrance on each side to get on the stage, and that was with great difficulty obtained; however at last I was produced on the centre of Covent-Garden boards as a performer—and, O grief of griefs! as a *Fine Gentleman*!—A great number of my late father's friends were assembled. The prepossession in favour of his sufferings—the public clamour, and pity of the audience on my known destitute situation, gained me such a reception as might have misled a wiser head than mine; as audiences every where, but at London in particular, are ever considerate and encouraging to a young performer. I do not mean to insinuate here that I possessed the Promethean heat, but it gave me courage to proceed; for it was a perpetual applause. I endeavoured to copy Woodward, but with awkwardness, and having no knowledge of the stage, &c. it certainly was a dreadful performance; not, but that some of my friends thought, from the great approbation that was given, and having no opinion of their own, I had done wonders.

I was so highly satisfied with myself, that as soon

as the scene was over, and not having patience to wait till I was summoned with the other characters by Mercury at the end of the farce, I took a chair to Mrs. Townsend's, where my mother was sitting, and entered amongst the astonished circle of old ladies assembled together—all glittering with my fine dress, and quite elevated with the applause and my own conceit, myself being the harbinger of the joyful news. The partial mother, seeing her son so fine, and fully persuaded he had acted well, could not restrain the glistening tear, no doubt prognosticating in her mind, that she beheld in her offspring a second Garrick—My ignorance was so great that I had intended also to have obliged the town with the Frenchman, in the same farce, but was luckily persuaded from it, for if that had really happened, it must not only have deprived me of that happy night, but have made it one of horror, and irretrievable damnation.

Friday, April the 19th, was fixed for the benefit of Mr. Bencraft, and Mr. Costollo, at Covent-Garden; the play was Alexander, and the part of Alexander, by Mr. Barry; they applied to me for to study Don Quixote in England, and I readily agreed to it; but thanks for once to my stupidity, I was under the necessity of giving it up, as I could not by any means drive the words into my

pate, and if I had, it must have proved an unfortunate attempt; therefore that Quixote scheme being abandoned, Lethe was again substituted, and they requested of me to act the Fine Gentleman, which I consented to; not but that I inwardly thought *my* Alexander would have done as much for their interest as Mr. Barry's. However as that was not their opinion, why, hey for the river Styx once more! and I surely that night needed a draught of Lethean waters to forget my cares.

A dress was to seek; for Bencraft and Costello would not pay so extravagantly as Shuter had, for the hire of the grand velvet suit; therefore the wardrobe of the theatre was to furnish me: but all the decent modern clothes were appropriated to the principal actors; and on inspecting the grand repository, Mr. Whitfield the wardrobe-keeper, produced a very short old suit of clothes, with a black velvet ground, and broad gold flowers, as dingy as the twenty four letters on a piece of gilded gingerbread—this apparel had not been brought to light since the first year Garrick played Lothario, at that theatre in 1746; when Quin acted Horatio, which was the last character that he performed, in the last week of May 1751, as an engaged actor, though he played twice after that his favourite character of Falstaff, for his friend Ryan's benefits, 1752 and 1753.

The suit being Garrick's, I with eagerness snatched at it. Bedecked in that sable array, for the modern Fine Gentleman, and to make that appearance complete, I added an old red surtout, trimmed with a dirty white fur, and a deep skinned cape of the same hue, honoured by old Giffard, I was informed, at Lincoln's Inn-Fields theatre, to exhibit King Lear in. This grand dress, with an old stock muff, used for the Gentleman Usher in the Rehearsal, my hair in papers, as on my first curious exhibition, gave the *tout ensemble* to my accomplished figure; that, when quite equipt, had it not been for the whimsical contradiction of my large paper curls, Lord Chalkstone's motley Nephew of delicate notions might have passed in a barn for a strolling Sciolto. No sooner had I made my *entrée*, than an involuntary fit of laughter seized the whole house from below to above, and from above to below, for such a contrast to the name or idea of a Fine Gentleman sure never was till then beheld; the preposterous figure was heightened in absurdity, by Woodward's appearing every week in that character with infinite credit. His acting was assisted by every elegance that whim, dress, fancy, judgment and fashion could bestow; whilst poor Pilgarlick chose to finish the curious appearance, by quitting Woodward's manner entirely, and spoke in my own voice.



which is naturally deep; so that my tones were drowned with the excessive laughter, and when I made my exit as the Fine Gentleman, whether the peals of mirth or the universal hisses were the strongest, seemed difficult to distinguish. I would not appear again at the conclusion of the piece, but flew to Shuter's dressing-room to tear off my pomp and know myself, but wanted not a sedan to convey me as before to Mrs. Townsend's. The next day's reflection presented fresh difficulties and approaching ruin.

Unfit for the stage, what could I do? My mother's existence was procured by the sale or pawning every trifle that could raise a few shillings; and the trembling to view the darkened prospect when the last resources were expended, compelled me to wait on Mr. Rich once more, and solicit him to retain me on any trifling salary for the ensuing year; but I received a short and peremptory "NO! You are unfit for the stage, Muster Whittington, and I won't larn you—you may go, Muster Whittington;" and he stroked his favourite cat.

Summer did not promise me better than the winter had done; for with my bad reception I could not get a recommendation or a probability of any engagement whatever, even in the country. Monday, May 17, 1757, *As You Like It*, was acted at Covent-Garden, for the benefit of Mr.

Anderfon, Mr. Wignel, and a Mad. Gondou. I was standing near the wing as Mrs. Woffington in *Rosalind*, and Mrs. Vincent in *Celia*, were going on the stage in the first act. Mrs. Woffington ironically said she was glad to have that opportunity of congratulating me on my stage success; and did not doubt, but such merit would insure me an engagement the following winter? I bowed but made her no answer—I knew her dislike to me, and was humiliated sufficiently, and needed not any slight to sink me lower. For then, and not till then, adversity had taught me to know myself. She went through *Rosalind* for four acts without my perceiving she was in the least disordered, but in the fifth she complained of great indisposition. I offered her my arm, the which she graciously accepted; I thought she looked softened in her behaviour, and had less of the *hauteur*. When she came off at the quick change of dress, she again complained of being ill; but got accoutred and returned to finish the part, and pronounced in the epilogue speech, “If it be true that good wine needs no bush—it is as true that a good play needs no epilogue,” &c. &c.—But when arrived at—“If I were among you I would kiss as many of you as had beards that pleased me.”—her voice broke, she faltered, endeavoured to go on, but could not proceed—then in a voice of

tremor screamed, O God! O God! tottered to the stage door speechless, where she was caught. The audience of course applauded till she was out of sight, and then sunk into awful looks of astonishment, both young and old, before and behind the curtain, to see one of the most handsome women of the age, a favourite principal actress, and who had for several seasons given high entertainment, struck so suddenly by the hand of death in such a situation of time and place, and in her prime of life, being then about forty-four. She was given over that night, and for several days; but so far recovered as to linger till near the year 1760, but existed as a mere skeleton; *sans* teeth, *sans* eyes, *sans* taste, *sans* every thing.—Vain is Beauty's "gaudy flower!

She died in rich circumstances. Colonel Cæsar of the guards, was by agreement to have received all her possessions, it having been settled between the Colonel and Mrs. Woffington, that which of the two, was the survivor should inherit all that the other possessed; and this was signed by a will by each party. But the generous Colonel was deceived; for she secretly made an after will, while her Colonel was engaged out at a dinner, and left every article whatever to her sister, Mrs. Cholmondeley. I don't believe, even the *shilling* was bequeathed him; and her sister not chusing to omit, or let any infringement prevent her from faith-

fully executing the will of the dead, demanded all Mrs. Woffington's paraphernalia from Mrs. Barrington, with whom all her stage jewels were left in trust, and from their long acquaintance she expected to enjoy them in their full lustre, with a good legacy added to cheer her woe on the occasion; but to her great surprise, mortification, and disappointment, the whole, even to the minutest article was demanded, and Mrs. Barrington was unwillingly compelled to resign her crown, her coronet, and all the marks of royal distinction, belonging to the late Queen Margaret.

This profusion of stage pomp and grandeur, the most rich and elegant of the kind, and all of them set in silver, in the hands of an actress, was a property of great consequence, looked most splendid, and would have descended from Queen to Queen, from Phœdra to Cleopatra, from Hermione to the Grecian Daughter in due tragical will-progression; but in the hands of a lady of fashion, only a few of them could with propriety be worn, and as what profit could arise from the sale of them, must be indeed contemptible, I wonder she had not the pleasure of making a genteel gift to an old friend and acquaintance of her sister's, particularly as Mrs. Cholmondeley was secure of all the real jewels, &c.

Having so often mentioned Mrs. Woffington, I

naturally apprehend many persons who have not had the pleasure of seeing her, would like a short description of that celebrated actress; and having related so many particulars concerning that lady, and pronounced authoritatively how much I was thought a strong caricature of her stage manner, it might be judged that I could give some ideas as to a similitude; which indeed I can with the strongest traits, and at the same time compliment the present age on their possessing an actress, in a first polished character, in the arch and attractive *Miss Farren*. Such parts as Lady Townly, Maria, Millamant, &c. now represented by her, were formerly thought Mrs. Woffington's best line of acting. Miss Farren is to a certainty very like Mrs. Woffington in some points, and enchantingly superior in others: Miss Farren, as to every intrinsic quality, may bid the world look on, scrutinize, and envy; while on the opposite side, we are compelled to place comparatively Mrs. Woffington, (who also had her share of praise-worthy qualities) yet a veil will be sometimes necessary to shade the frailties too often prevalent over the human disposition.

## S C A L E o f M E R I T.

Their complexions and features much alike——Miss Farren will be more like ten years hence; before which time I hope she will be distinguished by some other appellation.

Mrs. WOFFINGTON.

MISS FARREN.

Mrs. Woffington was tall - - - - So is Miss Farren.

Mrs. Woffington was beautiful - - - So is Miss Farren.

Mrs. Woffington was elegant - - - So is Miss Farren.

Mrs. Woffington was well bred - - - So is Miss Farren.

Mrs. Woffington had wit - - - So has Miss Farren.

Mrs. Woffington had a harsh, broken, and } Miss Farren's musical and bewitching.  
discordant voice - - - -

Mrs. Woffington *could be* rude and vulgar - Miss Farren *never*.

So undoubtedly Miss Farren seizes the wreath of Fame with security, as she adds to her perfections, in the Scale of Merit, virtue, modesty, reverence to a parent, and every other endearing quality ; therefore with propriety and for the credit of the Drama, let me hurl my cap and cry——

*Long live THE FARREN.*

So my dear, agreeable Miss Farren, for the present adieu—and now let me inform the reader, that on the night of Mrs. Woffington's fatal illness, Mr. Wignell, an under actor at Covent-Garden, was enlisting troops to form a party at Maidstone in Kent, where it was said there had not been a company of comedians for some years ; and that one from London would of course do wonders. I asked Mrs. Barrington to intercede for me, but she refused any interference ; I therefore waited on Mr. Wignell, who told me, he was erecting a wooden booth at Maidstone, and that Mr. and Mrs. Barrington, who usually went to Bristol, were disappointed that year on account of some dispute with the mayor, and he should find in them (his cousins) a tower of strength.

Mr. Barrington, was not a very good comedian ; but yet was in low Irishmen, (Mr. Moody indeed excepted) the best I ever saw—such as the Teagues, in the Committee, Twin Rivals, &c. but would have been a bad Major O'Flaharty, as he was in

fact a very indifferent Sir Callaghan. Miss Hallam was to be there, niece to Mrs. Barrington, and had been bred under her with the utmost care and reared to be an accomplished actress, as the reader will allow, when I announce that Miss Hallam is the present Mrs. Mattocks; for whom I have, and shall ever retain the highest regard; and am indebted to both Mr. and Mrs. Mattocks, for repeated acts of kindness and friendship.

I was, from the emergency of Mr. Wignell's company not being filled, to my delight accepted as a sharer, and enrolled one of their commonwealth. The performers collected for this Kentish expedition were—Mr. Wignell, Mr. Barrington, Mr. Morgan, Mr. Smith, Mr. Haughton, Mr. Clough, Mr. Jones, Mr. Wilkinson, Mr. Buck, Mr. Castle;—Mrs. Barrington, Miss Morrison (now Mrs. Hull), Miss Bradshaw, Mrs. Roberts, Mrs. Wignell, Mrs. Haughton, and Miss Hallam.

I got home, and judged that I had for once done something like a transaction of business; and also found I had the interest of a great friend of my mother's, who I have the honour at this day to call a relation, and to whom I am and have been greatly obliged;—the Lady's name was Wardale, she lived at Carlisle. To those who



knew her, I need not add praise ; those who did not, may regret that they had not the pleasure of being acquainted with such an agreeable, sensible, well bred woman.

This Mrs. Wardale, anxious for my situation and welfare, had prevailed on the Honourable Miss Foley, sister to Lord Foley, to ask the favour of a letter of recommendation from her intimate friend, Lord Mansfield, to Mr. Garrick ; which his Lordship immediately complied with : so with those credentials I was to proceed on a visit the next day, and which I assure the reader seem'd to me to require more than common fortitude. I marched up and down Southampton street three or four times before I dared rap at this great man's door, as fearing instant dismissal might follow ; or what appeared to me almost as dreadful, if graciously admitted, how I should be able to walk, move, or speak before him. . . However the rap was at last given, and the deed was done past all retreating.—“ Is Mr. Garrick at home ? ” —“ Yes. ” —Then delivering the letter from Miss Foley, with an enclosed one from Lord Mansfield, and after waiting in a parlour for about ten minutes, I was ordered to approach. Mr. Garrick glanced his scrutinizing eye first at me, then at the letter, and so alternately ; at last—“ Well, Sir—Hey !—What, now you are a stage

candidate? Well, Sir, let me have a taste of your quality."—I, distilled almost to jelly with my fear, attempted a speech from Richard, and another from Essex; which he encouraged, by observing, I was so much frightened, that he could not form any judgment of my abilities; but assured me, it was not a bad omen, as fear was by no means a sign of want of merit, but often the contrary. We then chatted for a few minutes, and I felt myself more easy, and requested leave to repeat a few speeches in imitation of the then principal stage representatives. "Nay—now," says Garrick, "Sir, you must take care of this, for I used to call myself the first at this business."—I luckily began with an imitation of Foote. It is difficult here to determine whether Garrick hated or feared Foote the most; sometimes one, sometimes the other was predominant; but from the attention of a few minutes, his looks brightened—the glow of his countenance transfused to mine, and he eagerly desired a repetition of the same speech. I was animated—forgot Garrick was present, and spoke at perfect ease.—"Hey, now! Now—what—all"—says Garrick, "How—really this—this—is—(with his usual hesitation and repetition of words)—Why—well—well—Do call on me again on Monday at eleven, and you may depend upon every assistance in my power. I will

see my brother manager, Mr. Lacey, to-day and let you know the result.

I now really thought Fortune had done with tormenting me. Honoured not only with the approbation, but friendship of that great man, I was elated into a degree of rapture I had not experienced for a long time; and in truth I fancied that, should the infallible Pope Garrick quit the stage, either by death, choice, or accident, I should in a few seasons be able to supply the vacant chair: So light is vanity! I did not walk, but flew to my lodgings, where my poor anxious mother sat trembling for the event—the noise I made in running up the stairs, and my countenance on entering the room, denoted in full evidence, that she was to receive good—not bad news. On my relating to her Mr. Garrick's kind behaviour, and his assurance of serving me, she concluded her son Tate's fortune was made: She blessed Garrick! she blessed me! and we were both for that day perfectly happy. Something may be said in favour of my belief at that time, as I was unacquainted with managers, actors, theatres, and the world: Not that I mean to insinuate that every manager is a devil—I know the contrary: That managers are men, and have their faults, and sometimes act wrong, is natural, and a spice of the devil in the composition is absolutely necessary, or

what would become of a manager at times, when surrounded by agitated fiends.

Mine and my mother's dinner that day (the 25th of May) was most luxuriant; and I can affirm that neither his Majesty nor any of his subjects dined with better appetite or greater happiness—not even my old friend Mrs. Bellamy\*, who describes, as she sat on the bottom step of Westminster Bridge, where she remained for several minutes watching the gently swelling tide, and blaming its tardy approach; but thinking better of it, she changed her cold situation and chose to return home, where she found her maid to her great surprise had provided a good supper, and declares that, even in the most elevated situation, she ever was in, and when her table has been spread with dainties, that she never made a more pleasing meal. So

The King of France with twenty thousand men,  
March'd up the hill, and then march'd down again.  
Shakspeare remarks, “If the man go to the  
“water and drown himself, it is will he, nill  
“he, he goes; mark you that; but if the water  
“come to him, and drown him, he drowns not  
“himself.”

On the Monday, I negligently slid up Southampton-street, not with the tottering attendant fear of the preceeding week. I was spruced out,

\* See her Apology, vol. v. page 61.

knocked at the door with a degree of assurance, was instantly admitted, and not only found Mr. Garrick alone, but as soon as he saw me, he expressed a wish of impatience for my promised visit; said he had heard a most favourable account of my mother, of whom he had made an enquiry, and should be glad for the sake of so deserving a woman to assist me to the utmost of his power.— This was a cordial to my heart; and I believe it may be made a certain observation, that whenever young or old wait on a superior as a dependent character he or she is anxiously tremulous, until satisfied whether the grant can be obtained or not. But now all appeared to me in a happy train.— Mr. Garrick said, “ Young Gentleman, I have seen Mr. Lacey, and we have determined to put you on the books at thirty shillings per week the ensuing season.—I will think of some line of characters for you to perform on the stage—my time is short, and not at my disposal this morning as I must be at Hampton to dinner; therefore, as I am on the wing, do oblige me with a repetition of what you recited last Saturday.—I readily complied, and executed it with spirit.— From the imitation of Foote I proceeded with great alacrity to several others; and when I came to those of Mr. Barry and Mrs. Woffington, as Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, I was obliged to.

stop, he seemed so truly entertained. I thought it very comical, and that the joke might not be lost, I laughed too; but on the merriment ceasing, I perceived a concealed third laughter—the Lady Teazle behind the screen, which greatly puzzled me; when on a sudden, a green cloth double door flew open, which I found led to a little breakfast parlour, and discovered a most elegant lady—no less a personage than Mrs. Garrick, who had it seems been purposely posted there for her secret opinion of my imitations of Foote; as Mr. Garrick always affected to pay great compliment to her judgment and opinion, and I really believe not all acted complaisance, but founded on real esteem—But like his brethren mortals had his frailties.

Mrs. Garrick apologized for her rudeness and intrusion—confessed she had taken possession of that snug spot unobserved, at the desire of Mr. Garrick, as from his account of my imitations on the Saturday, she expected to be much gratified; but when she heard the tones of Mrs. Woffington, the ridicule was so strongly pointed, that it was not in her power to restrain from laughter, by the pleasure and great satisfaction she had received. If it had happened otherwise Mrs. Mouse would not have appeared, but kept snug in her hole.—Perhaps female prejudice here might ope-

rate in my favour, as Mr. Garrick had previous to his marriage with Madam Violette, paid his devoirs to Mrs. Woffington.

Before I took my leave, I acquainted our Roscius with my intention relative to Maidstone, which he approved, and said practice would acquire me freedom and ease on the stage—it was what he had done previous to his public appearance in London: But the chief lesson he would give to a young man, trying his fortune on the stage, was *sobriety*; and above all—in a great character, or in an inferior one, however trifling it might be, always to be perfect: For that, he observed, was the ground-work for excellence in every walk of the drama; and by attention to the author, a novice would soon find from the feelings of his audience his natural bent, as without being master of the words, no actor could comprehend or execute the character, or so far forget himself as to assume the being another person, whether a king or a cobbler. Actors, he said, often mistook their talents by following their inclinations in lieu of their real genius; but, if always perfect, a lucky hit might set them right, and perhaps in the very characters they expected to fail in. Here ended Garrick's lesson; I made my bow and departed, not doubting but when the autumn approached I should read my name:

in the news-papers, and (as the Apprentice says) stuck in large capitals,

*The part of OTHELLO, by a Young Gentleman.*

But—" Hope thou hast told me lies from day to day."

In a week my expedition to Maidstone commenced. My mother with much difficulty equipped me with five guineas; Capt. Forbes gave me a flaming purple satin waistcoat, profusely trimmed with silver, such was the fashion of those times, which I reserved for Sundays and visiting days.

I stepped into the Gravesend boat, and for one shilling, sailed with a fair wind, and arrived at the end of my voyage safe, (but sick) and from Gravesend a stage-coach conveyed me to Chatham, and the next day in a chaise I arrived at Maidstone. It seemed to me a very long journey, for going once with my father to Sheerness, when about the age of fourteen, (on some election business for a Mr. Taffe of Ireland) was my extent of travelling; and Richmond, Hampton Court, and Greenwich, what I called going into the country; and Cockney-like, thought my being once with Captain Forbes to Windsor, a tedious journey. The country about Maidstone seemed delightful, but now it is almost past my remembrance.

Mr. Garrick had, unknown to me, spoke to



Miss Bradshaw, then of his theatre, (but now no more) to keep me as much as possible under petticoat government, and to be one of her party at tea, cards, &c. and to observe how I went on, and to send him *minute* information. In consequence of his request, I was admitted, like *Petulant* or *Witwoud*, into the female club, on first subscribing the proper allotment stated for tea, coffee, sugar, &c. The quartette consisted of Mrs. Bradshaw, Mrs. Roberts, Miss Morrison, and myself. This brought on not only an acquaintance, but a lasting friendship, and high esteem between Mrs. Hull and me. If riches immense could be added to her other good qualities, my praise here would not be neglected, but read with pleasure. The latter part of the season brought Mr. Hull; she introduced me to that gentleman, and with whom good fellowship and good will has from that time, and ever will, I hope, remain between us.

Were I to expatiate on the kindnesses I have experienced from Mr. and Mrs. Hull, I should make such a digression as might not be excused, and therefore will conclude with thanks, and truly wishing them every happiness and prosperity.

We opened at Maidstone with the *Beaux Stratagem*.—Archer, Mr. Wignell; Aimwell, Mr. Wilkinson; Foigard, Mr. Barrington; Dorinda,

Mrs. Barrington; Mrs. Sullen, Miss Morrisone. —Not more than five pounds in the house; I was much frightened, *very imperfect*, and more alarmed than when I first sported my figure in the Fine Gentleman; the play (except as to myself) was got through decently. The little motley troop from London certainly deserved more attention and encouragement than was bestowed.

Mrs. Barrington had an excellent wardrobe of her own; and being the intimate of Mrs. Woffington, had the entire treasure of her tragedy jewels, which at that time Mrs. Barrington eyed as her own property, by having nine parts of the law in her favour—possession. Her royal train should alone have been sufficient to have allured the country Bumpkins. Added to the tragedy diamonds, Mr. and Mrs. Barrington amazed the eyes and ears of the little streets with a very handsome one-horse chair, and every noon took a genteel airing; they were well-bred, sensible, and behaved properly to every body there; living with oeconomy and every decency, which could cause them to be esteemed and respected, and were a credit to their profession. Our houses were shockingly attended, though even I, was the Romeo, Barnwell, Shore, Orestes, and the Douglas. In Douglas, (without a joke) I was very well received; but not even my Orestes, nor Mrs. Bar-

ington's Andromache, could attract a sufficient audience. Those who attended we were obliged to dismiss from our booth. The consequence was great grumbling, great poverty, and infinite uneasiness—some weeks not sharing six shillings; and what was as bad—Wignell, my manager, acted Lord Townly, and made me perform a Constable, a Drawer, &c. which much offended my dignity, an error most young actors and actresses are apt to fall into. If the performers do not approve of the parts allotted them, they will against observation, decency, and common sense, ever take pains to be ridiculous, rude, and absurd, by which behaviour they are certain every judicious thinking spectator, bestows the censure on them which such conduct deserves—be it in a village, a barn, or theatre.

A performer will never convert an audience to the belief, of finding him worthy of being trusted with a thousand lines, if he does not speak *fix* with great care, attention and propriety. What leads actors in some measure into this unfortunate and ill-conceived practice for their future welfare, is listening to idle, dissipated companions, who too often are termed their friends, and encourage them in such behaviour, while they are laughing on the stage, because they do not know three lines of their damned parts, as they term them; and

instead of joining the his for reformation to make them know themselves and feel the insult they have given the audience, applaud them for it, and are the occasion of leading the performers next day into what Colley Cibber justly remarks, "A jolly negligence of rehearsals, and teach them to become dupes to their own folly." Players should one and all, weekly repeat Shakspeare's advice: He is the great masterly explainer—his single, short lesson, conveys the whole art, and says more to the purpose, than any laborious writer could cram into the largest folio.

Mr. Quin, by proper conception of character, made his first impression on the public by his respectful manner, when acting the Lieutenant of the Tower: But had Mr. Quin treated it with contempt, (as I did the Constable) he might have missed the happy tide of Fortune, and continued in obscurity to the loss of his own future fame; and the public would never have seen him as that excellent actor he ever after remained.

Mr. Quin had wit, generosity, and a strong understanding, and by never forgetting his own dignity, he was never forgot by others: He obtained the respect and esteem of all; his death was as much lamented by all ranks at Bath, where he resided, as if the first man of quality there had departed this life, and possessed of the same good

talents and qualities.—Doctor Mushett, now in York, will testify my assertion relative to Mr. Quin, as he attended him to the last, and was for years intimately acquainted with him.

I have had the pleasure of hearing and seeing that gentleman within these few years, (at General St. Leger's) introduce Mr. Quin's character in such a manner as to be a striking portrait of that celebrated man. A demonstrative proof that however the illiberal, the ignorant, the malevolent, the envious, and the enthusiast, the conceited, or the vain may treat stage professors, yet, where talents are graced with virtues, the actor will be acceptable at any table. It is galling to remark, but it is a truth, that it is the actor which disgraces the stage, and not the stage the actor; and the vulgar, not knowing how to distinguish, indiscriminately throw the good and the bad in the same dirty reservoir of disgrace: To prove the assertion true, many actresses by the help of natural genius only, (the gift of God himself) have arrived at the summit of fame and fashion—as Mrs. Oldfield, Bracegirdle, Cibber, Woffington, Bellamy, Crawford, &c. But if persons of rank and fortune could offer such respect to stage talents only, what difference must they think and feel, when paying that polite tribute where superior talents, adorned by virtue, are combined in the

name of SIDDONS: her example as a wife and mother, the greatest need not blust to follow; and those, who from misfortune labour in a degraded and middling line, may be proud to admire and imitate.

Mrs. Siddons's private worth deserves regard; the credit of the stage may always wish it to be preserved, and never struck from its annals. Mrs. Cibber is the only actress my remembrance can compare with Mrs. Siddons; and Mrs. Cibber in five or six parts might be, if on the boards, and in equal bloom, able to occasion the odds; but it would be a contest of a confined nature; as Mrs. Siddons's Lady Macbeth, Zara in the Mourning Bride, &c. were characters Mrs. Cibber could not have attempted with any degree of comparison; and Mrs. Siddons, in a theatrical lottery, would certainly obtain fifteen prizes out of twenty. No bad compliment to Mrs. Siddons: for if her predecessors are to be considered by her admirers as people who knew nothing of the matter, her praise must be less on a comparative struggle for victory. Certainly, where disdain, contempt, pride, or indignation are to be expressed, it may safely be affirmed she there stands unrivalled, and is herself alone. In one passage she always reminds me of Mrs. Cibber in voice, manner, and features, where in Isabella she pro-

nounces—"Now I defy you!—now I laugh at you, ye tyrants! murderers!"

I do not mean to insinuate Mrs. Siddons has not foibles or faults—I can only say, if she has, I am not acquainted with them. "But," says Ill-nature, "I am sure she does so and so:"—And why so much pains, anxiety, and labour to insinuate that Mrs. Siddons is not all perfection? Let the accusers take the same pains to look at their own faults, and pluck the beam from their own eye, and then fairly make the comparison; and let them ever keep in mind,

Men's evil manners live in brass, their virtues

We write in water.——

I will conclude Mrs. Siddons's panegyric with this wish, that every lady on the stage may follow her example in private life; and with proper emulation endeavour to surpass or equal her in her public character.

Having taken the liberty to be so free with my opinion as to the several stage favorites; and having mentioned Mrs. Cibber only as competitor, with Mrs. Siddons, I cannot but in justice and gratitude, also with shame recollect I had forgot Mrs. Yates's merit, not to mention her attractive person. Her Margaret of Anjou stands as much unrivalled as does Mrs. Siddons's Zara; her Epilogue to that play must not be forgot, nor her elegance and various excellencies; or Mrs. Craw-

ford's fifth act of Lady Randolph. I fancy myself jogged by some Old Critic—"O for shame! not to recollect Mrs. Pritchard?" Indeed I do—her manner and person were clumsy, her face not delicate, but open and agreeable; yet with that large figure, she in comedy, nay, even in the *Fine Ladies*, threw all competitors at a distance. Her Lady Betty Modish, Mrs. Sullen, Maria, and Beatrice, were wonderful; and her Clarinda, was so easy, so natural, so spirited, and vivacious, that in the third act, her comic powers were such as to cast all other actresses at so great a distance, as made the beautiful Woffington shrink under her superior and combined excellence. In tragedy, Lady Macbeth was by much her best part—and good acting it was; but she was not so finely collected throughout as Mrs. Siddons is in that character. Mr. Garrick assured me he did not approve of her tragedy; for her scenes of grief were tiresomely blubbering; in no part more remarkably so, than in the last scene of Volumnia in *Coriolanus*. I had forgot to mention Mrs. Cibber, (though very indifferent indeed) as a comic actress, but, to which she foolishly gave the preference. She spoke an epilogue equal, if not superior to any lady, I remember.

To say those Ladies had merit, is the true compliment to those of the present day; for what more



dem performers insinuate, that the late actors did not understand the art of playing, is paying themselves a very bad compliment: As I observed before, if Mrs. Cibber had been comparatively an indifferent actress, where is the wonder that Mrs. Siddons should be superior. I urge, it is Mrs. Cibber's great excellence raises Mrs. Siddons's reputation.

Indeed, were snarlers to advance, that music, operas, theatres, singers, and splendid scenery to plays in the present æra, were not on a par with the magnificence of the year 1750, then indeed all credit might with propriety be rendered doubtful, and the names of Barry, Cibber, or even a Garrick's reputation, would require caution and consideration as to the belief.

Most undoubtedly the improvements are wonderful, but beyond the mark of profit; for managers were thirty years ago gentlemen of more than ideal property; but now in all the three kingdoms produce me an independent one: I wish there were many contradictions to this assertion, and myself included in the number.

I have made such a digression on stage matters, that I have left myself acting the Constable, &c. far behind like the prisoner at large, so must return to Maidstone duty, where the business was so bad, that we were obliged to begin the benefits, in hopes

that what our good acting could not produce, yet regard for individuals would soften their hearts and fill the house.—I had the Distressed Mother; the amount only three pounds!—my profit on the expences being deducted, was actually *one shilling and sixpence, and two pieces of candle*—a dismal banquet for Prince Orestes.—I was reduced to two shillings, consequently under the necessity of asking leave of absence, (like a boy at school) for not being a Constable on the Monday, and I would return on the Wednesday; which being granted, I resolved on a long walk, (being then much more convenient than the stage-coach) to Gravesend, from thence in the Gravesend boat, arrived in London, and drained three guineas more from my affectionate mother:—Necessity has no law. Thus replenished I returned back, and got to Maidstone on Tuesday night.

I had not exposed my poverty to the troop, if I had, they were neither able nor willing to have relieved me—avowed poverty would have lowered me immediately; and my five guineas when I first went to Maidstone, had enabled me to appear in a genteel decent manner. On this my first tour, I was grasping for great parts, but from timidity, and not having time to be perfect, my prospect was not the most favourable—Miss Bradshaw's secret account, (a toad eater,

the spawn of Adulation,) did not lead Mr. Garrick to any favourable expectations. A curious letter of my own to Mr. Garrick, blotted, badly spelt, and very incoherent, confirmed his then growing ill opinion of me; and he had declared from the Maidstone accounts, which he relied on, that nothing could be done with me. Wilkinson was a stupid lad, and he had, for once, deceived his judgment on a sudden surprise.

The business grew worse and worse—benefits instead of improving or giving hopes of an approaching harvest, overshadowed us with clouds and darkness. We were all poor and sulky—neither to be led nor drove.

“Soldiers unpaid, who hardly did their duty.”

The manager, by paying his bills, &c. and being what they termed a good stroller; who understood well the art of application and solicitation, was certain of a good benefit. Mr. and Mrs. Barrington from their dignity, carriage, and divers marks of distinction, also expected the same; nay, seemed assured of it. Now *we*, the said soldiers and our lasses, did not approve of this determined distinction intended by the inhabitants of Maidstone, to feed the rich and let us poor be the marks for Scorn to point its slowly moving finger at. The consequence was a conspiracy—which soon burst out and flamed into an open rebel-

lion; a memorial of-dissentients was signed and presented, "That as the playhouse in the Star Yard, Maidstone, was so ill attended, and as there were so many sufferers, they could not—*would not proceed*, or act any more in that Booth for the emolument of two or three persons. As to continue a fortnight longer would plunge all in the utmost penury and want." Alluded to numerous inconveniencies; therefore, unless they were mutual gainers, they would not undergo difficulties and distress for the advantage of *the Trio*, and themselves in want of means for existence. This was immediately assented to, signed and sealed by the manager, and Mr. and Mrs. Barrington, or a revolt the next day was determined. This demand cannot be justified on honest grounds; because, had any one of us, four weeks before that, been blessed with a crowded house, that one would have judged it a robbery to have been compelled by the rest who had failed to have shared the profit amongst them: however if poverty is a plea for an act of injustice, that point we could prove and swear to with safe consciences—As we thought Wignell and the Barringtons getting such an amazing sum as nineteen or twenty pounds was too luxurious a prospect, while we were in so barren and dreary a state. The result was, that with the assize week and the two

benefits equally divided, matters closed with such brilliancy, that on my return to London I was enabled to restore two guineas back to my mother, in part of payment, for the three she had obtained for me with difficulty ; and it was a double gift, as she received it from that welcome visitor her son.

Early in September 1757, Drury-Lane opened, and I attended, as being then enrolled on the royal list of his Majesty's company of comedians. Mr. Garrick acted early in October—his second character was Romeo, and without having looked or spoke to me, or even affording me an opportunity of addressing him when I saw him. On the rehearsal of Romeo and Juliet, I was summoned on the stage by Cross the prompter, who said he had orders from Mr. Garrick that I should wait as a Torch Bearer in the last act, and also as a Waiting Gentleman in every play. On which Mr. Garrick advanced, and, before the company, said aloud, " This, Sir, is my command—and if not " complied with I shall take your coat off and do " the business myself ; and you, Sir, will immediately be dismissed my theatre." There certainly was a severity in this ; for though I stood astonished, grieved, and petrified at this sudden appointment, I had not refused ; and therefore the pointed manner in which he spoke was tyranny, in a degree I never then had seen exercised with-

out provocation. I cannot but at the present moment think this unprovoked behaviour, in my then situation, was cruelty to the extreme. What secret pique he had for such sudden treatment I never could learn; but he really made me truly miserable—and if he aimed at that as an act to gratify ambition, he accomplished his purpose.

The theatre being for the first month opened three nights in a week, my salary was only fifteen shillings as play-house pay, and when got to four nights, merely twenty shillings; but that pittance was too material an object for me to think of relinquishing. I waited (as it is termed) in the Mourning Bride—the Funeral Procession in Romeo and Juliet—Macbeth, and twice rode a hobby horse in the Field of Battle, when Garrick acted Bayes. Early in the season Mr. Foote was to play Cadwallader, in the Author, which farce had been produced the winter before, and acted with great success. Foote was to perform six nights, then go to Dublin, and return in January and revive the same farce again.—The Author was at that time so fashionable, that *Becky—my dear Becky*, was a constant phrase from all ranks of people both high and low, as they walked the streets of London. I have ever been supposed a pupil of Mr. Foote's—the fol-

lowing circumstance will prove the contrary; for on my word of honour, I had never seen Mr. Foote till that very season, behind the scenes, except as a performer on the stage;—had I met him in the street, or seen him in a room, I do not believe I should have known him.. The last week of Mr. Foote's playing in Drury-Lane, previous to his intended trip to Ireland, he was accidentally with Garrick, after his performance of Kiteley, as was Mr. Holland and others. The conversation, as I was informed, by chance turned on imitation.—Garrick said, "Egad, Foote! there is a young fellow engaged with me, who I really think is superior to either of us at mimicry.—I used to think myself well at it, but I actually give him the preference: He has tried to resemble me, but that will not do; though Mrs. Garrick says, she is sure he will be like me."—"Damn it!" says Foote, "I should like to hear him." Holland, with Garrick's approbation, came immediately to inquire for me. I was soon found in the green-room, and escorted to the manager's cabinet, assuring me that Mr. Garrick wanted to see me on particular business. My heart panted with fear, doubt, and hope, on this unexpected summons; after an awkward entrance and a silence of a few minutes, my suspense was eased, by Mr. Garrick very good naturedly say-

ing, that he had spoke well of me to Mr. Foote, and desired I would satisfy that gentleman with a taste of my quality, such as first struck my fancy; adding, that he expected I would do my best in order to convince his *good* friend, Mr. Foote, that his assertions of my merit were not exaggerated. I complied, and (as the phrase is) *took off* several performers—Barry, Sparks, Woffington, Ridout, Sheridan, &c.—received high encomiums and thanks—made my bow and retired from the august assembly. Mr. O——n, now living, not then on the stage, can testify all these particulars.

The next day my friend, Mr. O——n, who was intimate with Foote, waited on me with that gentleman's compliments, intimating, that he was going to Dublin for a few weeks in five or six days time.—He had observed, Mr. Garrick thought me only fit for his Hobby Horse in the Rehearsal, and if I wished to be released from such tyranny, he would be glad of my company to Ireland at his own expence, and he would fix me on genteel terms with Mr. Sheridan—that I should appear in Othello, and he would act Iago. This was a cheering cordial elixir to my drooping spirits, and to my still more drooping pocket. I turned over in my mind several of the Irish families (mentioned in the early part of this work),



and that was one inducement—another was, my situation might be bettered, but it could not be worse; and on a short reflection, I desired my respectful compliments (with my mother's approbation) to Mr. Foote, and was apprehensive I might incur Mr. Garrick's displeasure; and if I should be so unfortunate as not to meet with a favourable reception in Ireland, I should in consequence thereof be greatly involved on my return to England, if I should be expelled from Drury-Lane theatre; for though the pittance I then received was small, yet trifling as it was, it was my only support; but if Mr. Foote could obtain Mr. Garrick's permission, I would gladly embrace the offer, begging that Mr. O——n, on the delivering my message would not omit my sense of Mr. Foote's kindness and good opinion. Mr. O——n undertook this embassy most cheerfully, and executed it with friendship and punctuality. Mr. Foote, without loss of time, waited on Mr. Garrick that very day, and acquainted him with what had passed, and obtained my leave of absence for six weeks.

On the evening I met my Master Garrick at the theatre, who confirmed the above treaty, and said, he was glad of an opportunity to serve me, and hoped it would turn out advantageous; but as it was probable as well as possible the expedi-

tion might fail, and I might not meet with success, he had from his motives of tenderness for me, consulted with Mr. Lacey, his brother manager, and that I might not want an asylum, in case of failure and disappointments, he had ordered an article to be drawn up for two years from that day, the 20th of October, to the end of the season 1759.

The managers giving me their consent for an absence of six weeks with Mr. Foote, I dared not object to the proposal; and indeed thought his reasons friendly, and afforded a prospect of bread for two years, by which time I hoped that warmer days might come. The article of course was prepared and signed. My equipment was poorly provided—my old black was my only suit, a small pair of bags easily contained my wardrobe. My mother dreaded this long voyage, and being used to vexation and crosses—experience made her give me but little hopes from Irish hospitality, or the appearance of a shabby distressed lad, soliciting favours——

For friends will fly you in the time of need.

From lodging, livelihood, and support, all that my mother could spare to give me to supply my empty purse with was six shillings; but luckily Mrs. Wardale, the lady of Carlisle, before-mentioned, hearing of my journey, and

knowing mine and my mother's inability, presented me with two guineas. I took leave of my affectionate parent—met Mr. Foote at the Bedford Arms, and in one hour after, set off with him in a post chaise, and his servant on horseback : We only travelled that night to his little cottage at Elstree, in Hertfordshire. Two days after that, we dined at Kitty Keney's, at West Chester, and the following day went with Captain Bonfoy, who was then commander of the Royal Yacht for Park-Gate, as the Captain said he would sail that afternoon :—here we were detained with several persons of fashion, who had been impatiently attending on the caprice of the wind. Mr. Hill, an elderly gentleman, Lord Macartney, Mr. Leeson, now Lord Milltown, and several others ; we all went on board, but all returned as the wind continued obstinate. . . We all messed together ; for Foote's company, as he was well acquainted with each, was the only treat that truly dreary place Park-Gate could afford. Our patience being exhausted, it was unanimously agreed, that we should proceed to Holyhead ; horses were hired—this was early in November, and was not pleasing to me, who had never rode twenty miles on horseback in my life ; however there was no alternative, as I was become a dependent traveller, and must submit to follow : I thought

we were all to have set off together—they went at seven o'clock in the morning, requesting Foote's company at each house they stopped at; but Foote and myself remained behind, and on my asking him the reason of his delay? he answered, that it was a rule of his, and worth my observation—that whenever he met with persons of distinction and fortune on the road, travelling to small inns, (as was, and is the case on the Welch roads) he made it a rule always to be half a day behind or before them; as, with all their politeness, they expected the best accommodations, or if they were so kind as to offer you a preference, you could not in policy or good manners accept such an offer; therefore you never could on such a journey be well suited or attended, unless by being the stage, at least, before or after them; and if going to another inn, the landlady of the neglected house would pique herself on her behaviour, to convince her guests they had paid the compliment of preference not to her only, but for their own comfort and advantage.

I performed this journey on horseback better than I expected, and was truly struck with wonder on passing the stupendous mountains of Penmanmeur and Penmenbough. Indeed Penmanmeur then, not only from its astonishing height, but from its perilous and immediate drop into the

roaring deep, gave every idea of horror which the Poets pen could describe. It is not so tremendous now, for though that mountain still maintains its lofty head above the clouds, yet a tolerable road is at present cut for a carriage, which in 1757 was not; and instead of falling from the precipice into the deep, if your horse stumbled, there is a friendly wall to secure you from such imminent danger.—Holyhead in Wales, is about ninety-two miles from West Chester; there we were detained again some days, and strange but true, the high living with the persons at that place, and a severe cold, had kept me ill in bed most part of that day; the wind changed, but it changed to a violent storm——

Will Fortune never come with both hands full?

And at nine at night, all dark and dismal, did we roll in the boat belonging to the Pacquet, over waves most dreary to behold; for the whiteness of the breakers shone double from the darkness of the night. When handed into the packet, I asked for a bed; but they were all secured, not even one for Mr. Foote—as plenty of cash from the great people, had made that request impossible to be complied with. The cabin was wedged like the black-hole at Calcutta. The tumultuous moving of the ship soon made my

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inquiries after a bed of down quite needless, for I sunk on the boards, where my poverty bags were my only pillow, and there I lay tossed in the most convulsive sickness that can be imagined. I have seen many suffer by this sea malady, but never I verily think, such an object of commiseration as myself: The storm increased, but the wind was fair for Ireland—as to death, I was so truly sick, that I was very indifferent whether I sunk or swam. Mr. Foote was, tolerably well, and walking most of the night from place to place.

Thank God, we arrived safe in Dublin Bay about twelve o'clock, and by one was taken in a Dunlarey hoy to Dublin Quay; a coach conveyed us to a tavern in College-Green, where we were regaled; I say we, though I continued very sick and much out of order: Indeed my stomach was ever inflated, and disturbed with a bilious complaint, which may be called hereditary; and that added to my irregular mode of living, and neglect of healthful exercise, should make me thankful it has not yet entirely overthrown me. In about an hour Mr. Foote went to the lodgings provided for him, and left me to take care of myself. I inquired for a hotel, and was directed to one on Essex Quay, to which place I took coach; where, overpowered with illness, sickness, and fatigue, I went to bed and lay till Monday noon,

but in a comfortless state. I rung the bell for breakfast, but it did not afford relief; and about four o'clock in the afternoon, crawled to the house I remembered to have left the day before in College-Green, where I had some soup, chicken, and wine, and after sitting full two hours, fancied myself better, owing to the momentary spirits the wine had given me. Paying for my repast, I inquired of the waiter where Mrs. Chaigneau lived? he replied, just over the way: This was agreeable intelligence, as indeed that was the family, the reader I hope will kindly recollect, I so particularly mentioned in the first part of my history—Then my fluttering heart hoped welcome to the poor, the orphan, and the stranger; next the apprehension of a rebuff occurred, but distress of situation pushed me on, and to the house, as directed, I went.—When I advanced with trembling and tottering steps to the corner palace, and enquiring if Mrs. Chaigneau was at home? I was answered with an affirmative—I desired the servant to acquaint his mistress, that a person from England requested to speak with her, and after waiting a few minutes (which my impatience doubled) a thin looking lady entered the room, but I could not recollect a feature, or any likeness to resemble the form I expected to behold; but supposed time, or illness might have

made heavy inroads on the brittle frame—with the utmost agitation, I presumed to inquire, if her name was Chaigneau? The lady answered—Yes. I then ventured to pronounce, Madam, I flatter myself you recollect me when you was in England; my name is Wilkinson, son of the late Doctor Wilkinson of the Savoy. She answered, indeed, Sir, you are mistaken. This was a thunder stroke, as my fears interpreted it a wilful disclaiming of her knowledge of me; but I was after a pause relieved by her looking serious and repeating to herself—Wilkinson! Wilkinson!—and suddenly said, O, young gentleman! I beg your pardon; believe I can now clear up this mistake, in which we both are at present involved—I have often heard your father and mother mentioned in terms of the highest regard by my brother and sister Chaigneau—You, as a stranger, have made a mistake as to the house; I am married to Mr. John Chaigneau, brother to Mr. William Chaigneau, and to whose house you have been wrongly directed—they live in Abbey-Street. I not knowing the way, she requested her servant might call a coach for me, which was instantly done (as there was then, and always is a stand of coaches in College-Green). I took my leave—apologized for the trouble I had given, was drove to Abbey-Street, and on my road over Essex Bridge was



vastly pleased at seeing the number of lamps, sedan chairs, carriages, hackney coaches, footmen with flambeaux, &c. as it appeared to resemble another London. When arrived at Abbey Street, and the awful rap was given, I was, not only from frequent misfortunes and disappointments all flutter, but found myself not well; yet I gave myself the comfort to attribute it to fancied illness, proceeding from anxiety, distress, and unaccustomed fatigue; and therefore hoped it would go off. The first answer to my inquiry at Mr. William Chaigneau's door from the servant was, that he could not tell whether either his master or mistress were at home or not, but would go and see; he soon returned with an answer more potent than the first. That they were both at home, and what was more fortunate, they were without company. I had no sooner entered the room where they were sitting, then—then what?—why to proceed requires the *best* of novel pens to present, fulfil, and do service to the scene that followed. This generous Mr. William Chaigneau and wife, were on the list of the few instances, where

Mutual temper with unclouded ray,

Could make to-morrow welcome as to-day.

Their pleasures were the same—their affections were the same. Their instantaneous recollection

of me—the great intimacy between the families—my father's death and calamities being so lately public, and now refreshed to their memory, revived the idea of their own distress, from the loss of their darling child, the infant-marriage between me and that daughter, my present assured, unfortunate, helpless, situation, with a look of desponding hope dependent on their feelings, all collected rushed on their alternate sudden thoughts with such quick transitions, as made them all combined too mighty for Mrs. Chaigneau's tender spirits; indeed so powerfully, that the fictitious distress of Lady Randolph on the stage, was by no means equal to her poignant sense of my misery and situation; and it was actually sometime before she could recover herself with any degree of composure to inquire what had brought me there, or what could be done to serve me. Mr. Chaigneau was also greatly agitated; but not to so extravagant a degree as my good benefactress, as she afterwards proved to the utmost extent. After a little composure, and my full relation of what had happened to my mother and myself, since the fatal marriage act passed, a comfortable supper was set on the table. After which pleasing ceremony, they assured me, that every exertion in their power, and all their friends and connexions, I might as much depend

upon as if the welfare of their own son; was the person, whose interest they were to plead for.

During a short interval I felt elated beyond myself, the transition was so wonderful; but alas! how fleeting are human joys as to pain, hope, or sorrow: For soon after this pleasing unforeseen sensation of rapture, I suddenly sunk into an heavy feverish languor, not in my power to uphold. Mrs. Chaigneau exclaimed, "My God! Tate is ill!" Her words were prophetic—I wished and tried to shake it off, but all in vain;—disorder and delirium grew too powerful, my head felt dreadfully deranged. My real friends, in every sense of the word, were alarmed; Mrs. Chaigneau declared she could not permit me by any means to return to the hotel, in such a state of apparent illness as I then seemed to labour under: They sent to the next door, engaged a comfortable lodging for me, and provided me with hock-wine, whey, and such accommodations as they thought immediately necessary. The ensuing day, instead of finding myself relieved, I was seized most dangerously by an outrageous miliary fever. I had, from their wonderful attention and regard, the attendance of one of the first physicians then in Dublin, (Doctor Lucas) and their own apothecary, with a constant careful nurse. Mrs. Chaigneau preferred waiting on Tate to the luxury of

company. She, and her cousin Mrs. Carty, during the day were seldom from my bedside. A stranger to have seen Mrs. Chaigneau weeping over me, must have supposed it her own dying son she was lamenting: I have often heard her repeat, that except the death of her dearly beloved daughter, she never suffered such distress, and said it awakened so strongly the remembrance of the sudden loss of her only child (ever by her to be lamented) that it excited her feelings beyond the power of restraining them, and recollection brought fresh to her memory her long intimacy with my worthy mother; and knowing her life of almost perpetual sorrow, by affliction heaped on affliction, and viewing in every light my helpless situation, these all conjoined was too much for her spirits to support.

In that outrageous fever did I continue, and in a truly lamentable state, with a complication of distraction and agony for near three weeks; blisters on my ankles, and every physical torture to increase my miseries. Mr. Chaigneau often used to joke and say, what an expensive guest I was to him for his old hock; the quantity I drank in whey, by his account, was incredible. However Providence, aiding my youth, brought me once more into the world; and here I must not omit my sincere and grateful acknowledgments to God.

For, good reader, will you believe it, that all this time of my severe suffering, notwithstanding Mr. Foote must have heard I had left the hotel and tavern with evident marks of indisposition, he never once (to the disgrace of Christianity be it asserted!) made inquiry whether I was living or dead; or if living, whether I had decent necessities: and with regret I am obliged to relate that, had I been left dependent on his care, though such an object of compassion, I had never from the dictates of his feelings or pity, his honesty, or honour, survived to give this relation of my illness; and I should have remained for him, truly destitute, having no mother or friend that he knew of in Ireland to close my eyes; but God raised me friends, therefore I have indeed reason to rejoice and praise my Maker.

Before I was able to go abroad, or even to leave my apartment, I sent my compliments to Mr. Foote, to acquaint him where I was; for Mr. and Mrs. Chaigneau were so offended at such brutality of behaviour towards me, that neither of them had given him any intelligence concerning me. Mr. Foote on my information, waited on Mr. Chaigneau, and by way of apology, said he could not see me for three or four days for fear of catching the infection from the fever—professed himself anxious to supply my wants, which he

was informed was at that time quite unnecessary. After that he waited on me as my most *anxious* friend—and in about three weeks I recovered so fast, by the help of my good nurses, that I dined every day with my preserving angels at the next door; was attended every noon with jellies, &c. and what was more extraordinary, had my chariot every morning at the door to take my daily airing.—O gemini! a coach!

The scene was changed——

Was alter'd quite.

And indeed it was as sudden and unexpected a metamorphose, as that of the Cobbler's Wife in the Devil to Pay.

As soon as I was able to be taken by my patrons a visiting, an elegant suit of clothes was provided for me, that I might be a credit, and *not* by my thread-bare appearance disgrace either my friends or myself. Mr. and Mrs. Chaigneau introduced me to all their acquaintance; nor could they be pleased more, than by any act of kindness that was bestowed on me. Their connections were particularly numerous, Mr. William Chaigneau being principal agent to most of the regiments on the Irish establishment, and was consequently universally known, and likewise respected.

All the families in Ireland, with whom my father and mother had formerly been intimate in

London, proved by innumerable acts of generosity and true zeal for my welfare, that friendship is sometimes more than a name. Their deeds and actions to me, gave full evidence of their partiality, nor do I in this account deceive the reader with the smallest particle that is erroneous, for there are those that are living, who can attest it minutely: Yet, were I now to land in this said Dublin where I was thirty-two years ago universally acquainted, the theatres excepted, I do not know one house I could with propriety approach!—Such quick and certain havock does that said voracious monster Death make with mankind. On my visiting abroad, I was soon invited to Lord Forbes's in Stephen's Green, also to the Kellys, Alderman and Mrs. Forbes, Ache-sons, Callages, John Chaigneau's, Coates's, Hamiltons, &c. and received particular favours from those persons, as well as from Lord Clambrasil, Lord Bellamont, Lord Milltown, Mr. Hill, Mills Knoxes, &c. &c. At each of the above families, in the full meaning of the word, I had a home, and I never received a cool look unless for staying away, though a favour may be bestowed with an ill grace; and I will beg leave here to give an instance. Lord Forbes I had been used to see frequently in London, even from the time of my wearing frocks; and I am certain his invitations in Dublin.

were intended most friendly, and his will was ever to serve me; but one day on dining with his Lordship, when several persons of quality were invited—the bottle, our fun of the table, after dinner moved quickly round, and as the wine circulated, not feeling any restraint, and his Lordship not being a stranger to me, I very heartily smacked my lips, and said, “O my Lord, this is excellent wine!” On which he paused, and looking full at me, (by which means he drew the attention of the whole company) said, with a satirical smile, “Pray, Tate, what, or who has made you a judge of wine? Never give your judgment in company as to wine; for in a young man like you it is not becoming or proper.” This effectually silenced me; nay, it did worse than that, for it made me feel my inferiority, and I was abashed and unhappy till released that evening from the company of the great, and which two hours before had greatly elated me. Nor do I think it excusable in any rank whatever, by any speech or look, to lessen the guest invited in the presence of others; for bread and cheese at home is preferable, though the dependent’s dinner may be termed an honour—From such honour, with *such behaviour*, heaven defend me!—That Lord Forbes had a more than common right to give his free sentiments to me, is cer-



tain, and beyond doubt meant it well, is as certain; but time and place in many things make such material difference, as the same actions suit not all men alike: for had his Lordship privately reprimanded me it would have been an obligation; but in the manner he did it—I to this moment think it was cruel and ill bred. It made such an impression that, notwithstanding after that I had a general invitation from him, which I could not from duty and policy avoid accepting yet I always wished the hour of visiting his Lordship was over.

This leads me to a like anecdote, which suddenly and impulsively bursts on my recollection: A first esteemed gentleman in the spacious county of York, whose polished understanding and manners were universally acknowledged and admired, even to the extent of popularity in the great world, some few years since desired to patronise a play. I sent my treasurer with the catalogue (as is usual on such occasions to any leading person); but on looking over the list of tragedies, comedies, and farces, he declared he could not determine, and desired Mr. Wilkinson would attend him and his party after dinner, at the inn where he then for a few days resided. Which mandate I obeyed; and without being arrogant, in my idea, (as his Majesty's patentee) undoubtedly expected being favoured with sitting at the cheerful

board, and holding some chit chat, relative to the play and farce that he intended to sanction. Instead of such usual, and indeed common civility, after waiting a considerable time in the bar, I was at length ushered into the room where the company had dined, when Sir \_\_\_\_\_, beckoned me to approach him at the upper end of the table, where I impertinently expected to have sat down ; but neither found a vacancy, or the waiter even ordered to produce me a chair. Sir \_\_\_\_\_ discoursed relative to the play—then of York city ; graciously observed I had acted Bayes, so as to merit his approbation ; and to heighten the compliment remarked, he was no judge, as he seldom visited the theatre, either in London or elsewhere. At length he condescendingly asked me to drink a glass of wine, which I begged to decline ; but he requested a worthy and respectable gentleman, (now living) to give a glass, the which he handed as if I had been a common porter waiting for a message : For I actually stood all the while at the backs of their chairs. I was most truly happy to depart, and from that day lost all anxiety or ray of inclination to pay my devoirs, or wait on that great man, who was then termed the *Grandison* of the age.

I would attribute this to want of thought at the time ; but I do not see how that could be the

case for so long a space, where sense and good breeding were by all allowed to be the characteristic qualities of that gentleman. I am aware, I shall be blamed by particular persons for mentioning the above; but in order to disarm *unfair* anger—five minutes pause, and a little allowance may save my condemnation. If I restrained myself from relating little matters, which have pleased or vexed me—I should by such a rule, be deprived of the liberty of expressing my thoughts when differently affected. I dare say, although it is a fact which I have related, it will be argued it might have been omitted? I subscribe to that opinion; but then let every feeling mind consider, that if I am allowed the freedom to express my being hurt by a person of quality in Ireland; and to whom I was so greatly obliged, I certainly, have a right to mention the other in England: for, unless respect due to his rank and character, obligations I had none; and in conclusion it was only a speck upon Ermine.

But his present Grace the Duke of Norfolk's behaviour to me is as great a contrast. I could fill a volume with encomiums, but that would offend him—and he is so universally known and beloved, that what I could say would be only superfluous.

“ To grace a title that was rich before,

“ To gild refined gold,

“ Is wasteful and ridiculous excess.”

His Grace of Norfolk is plain in his attire, possesses wit, accompanied with infinite understanding, that leads his natural temper, which is gracious and condescending, in his manner friendly and honourable, and is ever endeavouring to promote the cheerfulness and happiness of others : Yet let not that easy manner betray Ignorance into the error of being too familiar ; for though his Grace's strong sense and good nature may smile and pardon, yet that person will find himself egregiously wrong who supposes that the first of his Majesty's subjects in the kingdom of Great Britain *ever forgets he is the Duke of Norfolk* : Therefore let inferiors, out of regard to themselves, bridle their familiarity, and always remember, that every deference is justly due.

Permit my Lord Duke to sink his own rank, to render himself still more agreeable, and bestow heartfelt joy at the sprightly board ; but, Ignorance ! beware of too much encroachment, lest such impolicy incur his secret contempt, and, like Macbeth's vaulting ambition, you o'erleap yourself, and fall on the other side. To those who are honoured with the acquaintance of his Grace of Norfolk, or to those who are strangers, I would pourtray my ideas of that nobleman in the words of Home : That,

—In his eye  
Sits Observation ; in each glance of thought  
Decision follows, as the thunderbolt  
Pursues the flash.

But having carried myself into Yorkshire, as I love travelling let me now return to my station in Dublin. Near Christmas I began to think of making my appearance on the stage—Mr. Chaigneau invited Mr. Sheridan the manager, Mr. Victor, and Mr. Foote to dinner. Mr. Foote's time of acting drew near an expiration ; he had played Cadwallader, in particular, with great success, Lord Foppington, Sir Paul Plyant, Bayes, Fondlewife, Buck, &c. He said to Mr. Chaigneau, at dinner, that he thought it necessary for Mr. Wilkinson to make his appearance on the Dublin stage before he departed, all joined in the same opinion. Mr. Chaigneau wished me to see the theatre ; Mr. Victor was to dine with him the next day in a family-way, and to take me there—Mr. Sheridan was all politeness. The first play I saw was in the lattices with Mr. Victor, which lattices are what is called in London, the green-boxes ; the play was the Recruiting Officer—Mr. Ryder's first appearance in that kingdom, in the character of Captain Plume ; he has since given universal satisfaction, both as manager and actor in Ireland, and his merit is now well known and

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I

confirmed in England. Foote acted Brazen; Isaac Sparks, Kite; Sylvia, by a Miss Kennedy, who soon retired well provided for by the generosity of Mr. L. Gardener.

It was appointed for me to appear the Monday following in Mr. Foote's *Tea*, in the character of a pupil, under Mr. Puzzle, the supposed director of a rehearsal.—Mr. Puzzle, by Mr. Foote. He sent me a part called Bounce, but which I begged, as the time was so short, to decline; and, as I did not attend any rehearsal, it was agreed that I should appear as Mr. Wilkinson (his pupil) when called upon, and repeat just what I could select to please myself—not any regular character.

When the night came, Lord Forbes, Mr. Chaigneau, and all my friends, went to encourage and support me, and engaged all they knew for the same purpose. One lucky circumstance was, my not being known as a performer, therefore I had their wishes and pity in a high degree—but great fear of my not being able to succeed. The story of my distressed situation—the blazoned marriage-act—my being a young gentleman—my illness, &c. &c. were become topics of public conversation: As to intelligence, requested by critics from the players relative to myself, they neither did nor could pronounce, with knowledge, either good or ill. But I will rather suppose five out of six spoke

to my disadvantage, from the too general depravity of human nature ; as persons listen to satire rather than praise : It is more descriptive, displays the tripping tongue, and suits conversation much better ; it gives energy to the informant, and quick ears to the languid.—The bill ran thus :

*After the PLAY*

Mr. FOOTE will give T E A.

Mr. PUZZLE (the Instructor) Mr. FOOTE.

First PUPIL, by a YOUNG GENTLEMAN,  
(*Who never appeared on any Stage before.*)

By eight in the evening I was in full dress behind the scenes ; I had never been there before ; the company were all strangers to me. I not knowing how to enter into conversation with the performers, and being announced as a pupil of Mr. Foote's, I did not receive any civility from them ; for, if I was a blockhead, I was not worth their notice ; and if an impudent imitator or mimic of their profession, bred by Mr. Foote in the same worthy art, I was, in their opinions, a despicable intruder. I could conceive all this, and certainly my situation on this critical night was not to be envied, as their sentiments, though not avowed, were the result of nature. I, on reflection, soon grew weary of my solitary seat in the green-

room ; alone in a crowd ; and between the play and farce looked through a hole in the curtain, and beheld an awful pleasing sight—a crowded, splendid audience—such as might strike the boldest with dismay.

The farce began, and Mr. Foote gained great applause, and roars of laughter succeeded. In the second act my time of trial drew near ; in about ten minutes I was called——“ Mr. Wilkinson ! Mr. Wilkinson ! ”——Had I obeyed a natural impulse, I was really so alarmed that I should have run away. But honour pricked me on—there was no alternative—my brain was a chaos ; but on I went, and must have made a very sheepish, timid appearance, as from fear, late illness, and apprehension, I trembled like a frightened clown in a pantomime : which Foote perceiving, good naturedly took me by the hand and led me forward ; when the burst of applause was wonderful, and apparently that of kindness and true benevolence ; but it could not instantly remove my timidity ; and I had no prompter to trust to, as all depended on myself.

Foote perceiving I was not fit for action, said to his two friends on the stage (seated like Smith and Johnson in the Rehearsal) “ This young gentleman is merely a novice on the stage ; he has not yet been properly drilled. But come, my



young friend, walk across the stage; breathe yourself, and shew your figure." I did so; the walk encouraged me, and another loud applause succeeded. I felt a glow, which seemed to say, "What have you to fear! Now, or *never*.— This is the night that either makes you or undoes you quite." And on the applause being repeated, I said to myself, that is as loud as any I have heard given to Mr. Garrick; I mustered up courage, and began with Mr. Luke Sparks of London, (brother to Isaac Sparks, then in Dublin) in the character of Capulet: Most of the gentlemen in the boxes knew all the London players, and no play in London was so familiar then as Romeo and Juliet: They were universally struck with the forcible manner of the speaking, and the striking resemblance of the features; a particular excellence in my mode of mimicry. A gentleman cried out, "Sparks of London! Sparks of London!" The applause resounded, even to my astonishment; and the audience were equally amazed, as they found *something*, where they in fact expected *nothing*. Next speech was their favourite Barry in Alexander; universally known, and as universally felt. I now found myself vastly elated and clever: Fear was vanished, and joy and pleasure succeeded; a proof what barometers we are! how soon elated, and how soon

depressed!—When quite at ease, I began with Mrs. Woffington in *Lady Macbeth*, and Barry in *Macbeth*. The laughter (which is the strongest applause on a *comic* occasion) was so loud and incessant, that I could not proceed: This was a minute of luxury; I was then in the region of bliss; I was encored; yet that lady had declared in London, on hearing I was to go with Foote to Ireland,—“Take me off! a puppy!—If he dare attemptit, by the living G—d he will be stoned to death.” Here the lady was mistaken; for, on repeating the part, the second applause was stronger than the preceding. A sudden thought occurred; I felt all hardy—all alert—all nerve—and immediately advanced six steps; and, before I spoke, I received the full testimony of “true imitation!” My master, as he was called, sat on the stage at the same time; I repeated twelve or fourteen lines of the very prologue he had spoke that night (being called for) to the Author, and he had almost every night repeated: I before Mr. Foote presented his other self; the audience from repetition were as perfect as I was; his manner, his voice, his oddities, I so exactly hit, that the pleasure, the glee it gave, may easily be conceived; to see and hear the mimic mimicked, and it really gave me a complete victory over Mr. Foote; for the suddenness of the action tripped up his

audacity so much, that he, with all his effrontery, sat foolish, wishing to appear equally pleased with the audience, but knew not how to play that difficult part: he was unprepared; the surprise and satisfaction was such, that, without any conclusion, the curtain was obliged to drop with reiterated bursts of applause. They are remarkable in Dublin, *when pleased*, to continue applauding till the curtain falls, often not suffering the play to finish. This was a compliment frequently paid to Mr. Sheridan:

Foote once said to that gentleman, very seriously, "My dear Sheridan, I wish you would relieve yourself of a great deal of labour and trouble!"

"In what manner?" says Sheridan, "do inform me, and I shall be obliged to you."

"Why," says Foote, "instead of Richard the Third, act King Henry in that tragedy."

"Good God, Mr. Foote! why should I relinquish Richard, where you are a witness I get such universal applause?—Give me your reason."

"O!" says Foote, "the best reason in the world; for if you will perform Henry instead of Richard, the play will finish in the first act, and the players may all go home in good time to supper."

When the farce, called Tea, was concluded, I had great congratulations paid seriously and ironically. Mr. Foote affected to be vastly pleased,

but in truth it was merely affectation, so differently do we feel for ourselves when ridicule is pointed at us ; but he said, it was perfectly well judged to make free with him, yet he did not think it very like himself, for it certainly was my *worst* imitation, but he rejoiced at my good fortune. In truth, Mr. Foote got the cash, not me ; what I did was for him, as he acted on shares ; and the fuller the house, the greater was his profit. He was piqued and chagrined ; but as he had kept within no bounds himself, and made free with all characters whatever, stage, pulpit, bar, public and private peculiarities, benefactors, patrons, friends as well as foes, he could not, with any degree of sense, appear displeased, or censure me for what I had done, but kept his resentment locked up for a more proper and convenient opportunity, as he considered the repetition of himself, in my imitations, was to his advantage, by the evident partiality the public had shewn me ; he made himself, therefore, tolerably easy, and may be truly said to have *packetted* the affront.

The conversation the next day, particularly of all my eager partial friends, was an universal cry of " Foote outdone ! Foote outdone ! the pupil the master !" and this was greatly assisted by their agreeable disappointment ; for I do not believe any one of them, however warm they might have

been in their wishes for my welfare, but trembled for the event; they felt unhappy lest I should make a despicable attempt, and be universally disapproved; and then reflected within themselves, "Good Heaven! what is to become of this poor youth? what can he do for a subsistence?" After my performance, from the success I had met with, I could neither eat, drink, or sleep, that night; pleasant dreams I needed not; my waking thoughts were so much superior.

The *Tea* was acted in regular succession several nights, nay, it was commanded by the Duke and Duchess of Bedford; his Grace was at that time Lord Lieutenant.

The *Rehearsal* was repeated, in which I performed the Princess Chloris. Being well dressed, my likeness and serious acting *alamode* Woffington, procured me great applause, though in so trifling a part. Let it be here considered that the imitation was universally felt above and below, as Mrs. Woffington had played three years in Dublin; her salary not less than 800*l.* per season, and two benefits. She was also very conspicuous at the head of the court party, with which she had certainly no business to interfere; but, as Scrub says, "It must be a plot, because there was a woman in it;" and that party increased the heat of the patriots, and in the end, though it made her

more public, it all ended in the destruction of the theatre, and the banishment of the manager, who relied on something better, and secretly expected from courtiers' promises that his greatness would rise from his destruction.—But plays (without his own learning) might have taught him better.—Alas! who wants not teaching?

Mrs Woffington being so well known to all ranks and degrees, was of infinite assistance to me as an imitator. After the first night of my performance, Mr. Sheridan appointed me a salary of three guineas per week, and requested, with my approbation, (which was readily obtained) that Mr. Foote would write to Mr. Garrick to grant permission for my continuance in Dublin till the end of February. Foote was obliged to go to England with all speed; as he had staid beyond his time; but I was left behind, waiting for Mr. Garrick's answer to Mr. Sheridan's request, but which soon arrived, and granted the petition requested by Mr. Foote.

Before January expired, I played Cadwallader, spoke the prologue, and acted Othello with much applause and credit to myself, the latter was certainly a very bold attempt; for, by the bye, Barry had performed that, his favourite character, repeatedly two winters before, Mr. King performed Iago, and Miss G. Philips (Mrs. Jordan's mother) Desdemona. Here it would be

unjust and ungrateful in me not to reflect with pleasure on the great civilities and kindnesses which I received from Mr. and Mrs. King in that early stage of life. There are different kinds of memories ; a good memory, a bad memory, and a convenient memory. What I am going to relate requires a bad memory, as not proper to be retained ; but I insert it to please myself ; and being a *sweet* story, will with it refresh the memory of my friend Mr. King.

This said Mr. Thomas King had set his heart on well preparing a new pantomime, in order to give his manager (Mr. Sheridan) a lift, and it was advertised for the Thursday, but it was not fit for preparation on the Wednesday. It was called the Whim, or Harlequin Villager. As Mr. King is, and ever was, indefatigable, he was determined to be at the theatre the whole Wednesday night, that he might be a spur to industry, and observe, that the painters, carpenters, &c. were strictly at their duty ; and to make the time pass more pleasantly in his dreary mansion, (for a large theatre certainly is so, when only lighted with three or four pieces of candle, and being a spot where murders of various kinds are weekly committed, and where ghosts undoubtedly are known to stalk) he therefore, to cheer his spirits, desired Mrs. King and myself to be with him.

in the green-room; we agreed, but I made it conditional, which was, provided we had something to eat as well as to drink, as mutton-chops or beef-steaks. He assented, and Mrs. King agreed to cook them, and I was to assist her. About ten o'clock, wine, rum, and oranges, entered the room, and the mutton-chops, properly sprinkled with pepper and salt, were placed in order on the well-rubbed gridiron, which a servant set close to the fender, waiting for further orders. I complained of cold, and the only seat in the green-room was, as usual, benched round, and immoveable. Chairs were called for—two were immediately brought—I answered for procuring a third for myself—and recollecting Mrs. Fitzhenry's dressing apartment was adjoining to the green-room, where I had seen an elbow-chair, and Mrs. Fitzhenry as Hermione sitting in her royal robes, I went in the dark, seized the chair by the elbows, but when I brought it near the fire-side, by a sudden jerk off flew the bottom, and, O ye powers! by the violence of the shock, the regalia, the treasures of Queen Elizabeth and Cleopatra rushed like a golden tide over our mutton-chops and bright gridiron. Reader, turn the leaf and guess the rest, or do not guess at all, just which suits your fancy. However, for one hour it cured all complaints of cold or hunger. While we retired, the servants of the the-



atre had the disagreeable trouble to assist to put the room in order, which indeed required some patience and care to accomplish. When the stable was cleansed, eating was out of the question; we had an excellent bowl of punch, which proved salutary, palatable, and restored us to harmony, and we passed two or three very cheerful friendly hours.

Early in February I received the following letter from my mother; it may not be thought worthy attention to readers in general, but every parent will be pleased with the genuine language of Nature. I shall therefore occasionally introduce a few letters as they occurred from a pattern of parental goodness.

*To Mr. WILKINSON, Abbey-street, Dublin.*

MY DEAR TATE,

" I reckoned every day and hour until I heard  
" how you got over so daring a part as that of  
" Othello is said to be, which, by the information  
" of yesterday's letter from Ireland, I find you  
" have executed beyond my expectation. My  
" wishes for all the joy, pleasure, and advantage  
" in that way of life, with un sullied reputation,  
" you may be assured of; with the same from  
" Mr. Townsend's, where the account of this  
" great character was as impatiently wished for as  
" by myself. It gives me great pleasure to hear

“ you are looked upon as so considerable a person;  
 “ in Dublin; and am of your opinion, that in  
 “ all respects you will never find the stage again so  
 “ much suited to your own humour.

“ I dined yesterday in Dean-street, with Lady  
 “ Forbes, the two Miss Wilsons there, and  
 “ the Captain just come home: We had a  
 “ very good dinner, and were all in good hu-  
 “ mour, and very merry. I got home by day to  
 “ meet your letter; then to Mrs. Townsend’s  
 “ with the contents.

“ You don’t say one word of Mr. and Mrs.  
 “ Chaigneau, nor the Kellys. I take for granted  
 “ they are all well, and went to see Othello. The  
 “ house at Covent Garden is quite forsaken,  
 “ and Rich gives away his box tickets by the  
 “ dozen.

“ Mrs. Davis has wrote, that she will send  
 “ snuff by you to Lady Forbes. I would have  
 “ you pay your respects there, now and then,  
 “ as I believe his Lordship to be what he professes.  
 “ Beg you would present my most sincere and  
 “ grateful respects in Abbey-street; wishing a long  
 “ continuance of good spirits, and lasting satis-  
 “ faction,

“ I am, your most affectionate mother,

“ G. WILKINSON.”

*London, January 28, 1758.*

## P. S. AN IMPROMPTU, by Miss JONES,

*Upon hearing that you played the part of Cadwallader, in the style of FOOTE, who was then acting the same part at Drury-Lane.*

“ ONE night when sleepless in my bed,  
 Garrick ran strangely in my head;  
 His legs so handsome—tho’ they’re short  
 The man’s just form’d for play and sport.  
 Hear a new wonder in his praise,  
 Beyond a Lear or matchless Bayes.  
 Wide is the space by sea and land  
 From Drury’s House to Dublin’s Strand :  
 Yet in one instant I’ll engage  
 A FOOT he’ll place upon each stage.”

It had not at this time been usual to have plays acted on Saturday nights, as they never had turned out beneficial or fashionable, though put into practice, when Woodward and Barry opened at Crow-street, and from use soon became as good a night as any other for the manager, but not I believe to this day as a benefit.—The prevalence of custom is astonishing—a Lady in London will go to a known bad opera on the Saturday, and though she professes being an amateur in music will not go on the Tuesday, though a good opera, because it is Tuesday. A Lady will go to the theatre at Edinburgh, Bath, and York, though to the most indifferent play, and as indifferently

acted, on the Saturday, *because* it is Saturday ; yet the best acted comedy shall be offered to the public, at either of those three theatres, on any other night, and be totally neglected, unless it is hinted that the night is to be fashionable, which alters the case. At Hull, the house would not even be a decent one, to whatever play might be performed, if it *was* a Saturday, unless the fashion. At Doncaster and Wakefield, there is not any material distinction as to nights.

I am led to these observations, by recollecting, when in Dublin, on this my first excursion, I judged it necessary, early in February, to wait upon Mr. Sheridan, in order to appoint a night for my benefit, which had been stipulated to be in that month; in consequence of my continuing with him. Mr. Sheridan observed, that my being a young man and a stranger, it could never answer for me, to venture on the expences of the theatre, the charge being forty pounds (but at present; sixty or seventy pounds per night). But he had an expedient to serve me more effectually, which was, to permit me the privilege of disposing of tickets, dividing the sum taken for those tickets between us ; and he would himself play, and secure its being serviceable to me. In fact, this secret service of his playing, he thought would make my numerous friends pour in tickets, and he :

reap great advantage by them ; and by his playing, (a great favour on a benefit) make himself appear in an advantageous light, and as generous, humane, and full of pity.—His throne again *threatening* the necessity of a second abdication from the towering walls of Crow-Street, *in terrorem* daily rearing their lofty heads in stately defiance.

To this act of liberality I objected, and with some degree of spirit, abided by my express engagement, though *verbal*, and referred him to the opinion of my friends. He now plainly perceived this would make him appear in a mercenary and mean light, therefore he gave up the point ; but at the same time observed, Mr. Wilkinson I cannot give you a night in February, unless you will take a Saturday ; and to this proposal, from necessity, I consented. That article being settled, he complained that I was not studied in farce parts, to be of service to him, (which indeed was true) ; and further observed, that instead of the performers, whom I had taken the liberty to bring into company where they were not, he judged it would have a better effect, if I would exhibit the manners of the performers where they actually were, and introduce imitations of such as were at that very time acting in Dublin. I observed to him, that I had not had leisure to have paid a sufficient

attention to that company, as objects for imitation ; it could not be the work of a week, or a month ; besides, were I capable, if I should take that freedom, they would most likely not only insult me, but make it a plea to refuse acting for my benefit. That argument seemed with Mr. Sheridan, to have but little weight ; he persisted angrily. I then intimated, that if I complied, I hoped he would not have any objection to my using his name, and that I did not do it of my own accord, but had his express command for that purpose ; and further urged, Surely, Sir, will they not think it unkind of the manager, that he should order a satirical performance on them, which they must feel and term a cruelty in their governor to inflict ? Mr. Sheridan seemed much vexed ; said, that what he had asked me to do, was to get me applause, and to serve *me*—not *himself* ; but he should by no means consent to my exposing the peculiarities of his actors and actresses, under the sanction of his desire and approbation ; he wished it to come before the audience as a sudden surprise, and as my own voluntary act, and after that had been done, he would have taken care to have had it so called for by the audience, as to prevent a possibility of the performers' anger, being of weight sufficient to prevent its repetition ; and the more it vexed the actors and actresses, the greater

relish it would give the audience; that I believe was too true.

However, I continued my objection, but at last (like a fool in the knowledge of mankind and the human heart) a lucky bright thought, as I judged it, occurred to me; and I said, my good Mr. Sheridan, I have hit upon the very thing to establish myself as a favourite with you, and the town. He seemed all impatience to know what it could be. My dear Sir, a thought has just entered my pate, which I think will draw money, and be of infinite service to myself. What is it! What is it! says Sheridan, with the utmost eagerness.—Why, Sir, says I, your rank in the theatre, and a gentleman so well known in Dublin, on and off the stage, must naturally occasion any striking imitation of yourself, to have a wonderful effect. I have paid great attention to your whole mode of acting, not only since I have been in Dublin; but two years before, when you played the whole season at Covent-Garden theatre; and do actually think, I can do a great deal on your stage with you *alone*, without interfering with any other actor's manner whatever.

Hogarth's penell could not testify more astonishment—he turned pale and red alternately—his lips quivered.—I instantaneously perceived I was in the wrong box; it was some time before he could

peak—he took a candle from off the table, and shewing me the room door—when at last his words found utterance—said, he never was so insulted, What! to be taken off by a buffoon upon his own stage! And as to mimicry, what is it? Why, a proceeding which he never could countenance; that he even despised Garrick and Foote, for having introduced so mean an art; and he then very politely desired me to walk down stairs. This was truly on the second, not the first floor, it being more convenient for his communication with the theatre, from that part of his dwelling house. I was obliged to march, and really felt petrified with my bright thought, which had turned out so contrary from what I had ignorantly expected. Mr. Sheridan held the candle for me only till I got to the first landing, and then hastily removed it, grumbling and squeaking to himself, and leaving me to feel my way in the dark, down a pair and a half of steep stairs, and to guess my road in hopes of finding the street door.

Mr. Sheridan's voice was deep, and as oppositely sharp; and I should not have disliked then to have put in practice what I proposed, had he given leave; for I was really perfect and ready. To a reader, this may appear insipid, but any person who can well recollect Mr. Sheridan's manner,



would be entertained to hear me in the proper vein relate it, as much depends on that; for there is a great deal in being in spirits.

After that fracas he neither permitted me to play; or spoke to me during my stay in Ireland, (my own night excepted). I fixed on Jane Shore and Tom Thumb, for my play and farce, on the night allotted me, Saturday, February 25, 1758.

Mr. Chaigneau himself waited on Mrs. Fitzhenry to request her powerful assistance in Alicia, to which request she kindly assented. Haftings, by Mr. Wilkinfon; Shore, by Mr. Dexter; —Jane Shore, by Miss Philips; Alicia, by Mrs. Fitzhenry; Queen Dollalolla, by Mr. Wilkinfon; Huncamunca, by Miss G. Philips.

At the bottom of the bill, tickets were to be had of Mr. Wilkinfon, at *his house* in Big Strand Street; for be it known, that in three or four weeks after my recovering from my illness, when in Abbey-Street, my good cheer, round of friends, and company, occasioned me to keep very late hours: The *then* Bishop of Lantaff lodged during the winter, on the floor under mine; the noise I made on coming home, and the added rumbling when got into my own apartment, with loud acting, singing, &c. made the Bishop's lodging very uncomfortable to him. He sent for

the landlord and informed him, my rehearsing in the day, and the greater noise I made at night, rendered him so uneasy, that he was under the necessity of insisting on the young actor's instantly quitting the lodgings, or he would ; for, he really had tried his patience to the utmost, and could no longer submit to it. The landlord, per force, waited on his next door neighbours (Mr. and Mrs. Chaigneau) and informed them in full of this unfortunate alledgement of his Grace, and humbly hoped they would not be offended at his not continuing Mr. Wilkinson as a lodger, as he could not permit it without sustaining the loss of his good and generous Bishop. Mr. and Mrs. Chaigneau laughed very heartily at the complaint, agreed in opinion with the landlord, allowed that he and the Bishop were both right, the latter having just cause for his stated objections. At dinner at my good home, where I actually was the king of the table, Mrs. Chaigneau with an assumed anger (a humour peculiar to the Irish only)—“ My God, Tate, I am mighty angry with you ; and faith you do not mind me !—I can tell you, Billy Chaigneau is angry with you too—Upon my conscience, I do not think you care whether we are or not ? but come my dear Tate, I will not make you uneasy—we are both joking.” So after explaining the landlord's visit, with an ex-

extraordinary bottle for me and the good Mr. William Chaigneau; and passing a happy afternoon with them and three or four intimates, I concurred in thinking it right to settle about my disgraceful departure from my lodgings and neighbourhood; when Mrs. Chaigneau's bright thought (far superior to mine with Mr. Sheridan) was, first to save Tate's money, and next not to inconvenience themselves. She said, "If you will not discredit our house as you have the Bishop's, we have one in Big Strand Street, not let this winter; and there is a man and a woman servant live in it—it is decently furnished, and it is kept well aired—our own house which we live in, you know is your eating house; we look on you as our son—you cannot want any thing but tea for breakfast, and such trifles. This is Friday, I will send immediately all necessaries, such as sheets, table linen, &c. &c. and all shall be comfortable by to-morrow night: Quit your lodging, and do not by any means fail in leaving a respectful card to the Bishop, as I am certain you have been very troublesome to him, or he would not have alledged such complaints against you; for, he declares he is not angry, but you are a plague to him."

These orders I obeyed—called at MY HOUSE (the sound of which pleased me much) on Saturday noon, and was highly delighted, and told the

servant pompously, I should not be at home till late, as I was engaged to dinner and for the evening, at Mr. George Hamilton's in Henry Street, with a large party. We dined at five; observe reader, that the custom of dining in Dublin was and is much later than in London; very few, if any person or persons in established trade there, ever dine till three o'clock, but in general at four. I kept my appointment at Mr. Hamilton's, and a happy day and evening I had; I got home about three o'clock in the morning; proud and satisfied was I when conveyed in a chair to my new mansion, where all seemed to be conducted with the utmost care, and made comfortable for my reception.

A merry day, and plenty of good things, had prepared me for sleep. The dining-room was spacious, the bed-chamber large, the bed excellent, and I laid myself down, expecting a delicious repose, to repair the fatigues of luxury: To relate what follows may seem superfluous. I need not add, with a mind at ease, I soon had the blessing of a sound sleep; which to prince or peasant is most delicious. "Well," says techy Impatience, "sleep and be d——d! What's that to me?" Why, my waspish friend, if you in any one point smatter of *antipathy*, here bestow your pity on me; I ask it as a charitable boon to my sufferings, tho'

it is possible you may laugh at me, and I beg you will make some little allowance for what you do not feel ; but if you do smatter of the like sensation, I am certain of your bounty. I can be astonished how any man, woman, or child, can faint at seeing a cat, because a cat I am partial to, and like as a companion ; another will faint at the smell of cheese ; a lady will shudder at a leg of mutton not being cut to please her ; and a thousand instances might be given of the weakness of human nature in such trifling matters : Yet they are in truth terrible to the persons who labour under the like unhappy prejudices, and too often laughed at by the observers, which is cruelty in the extreme : for how can I reconcile to myself, in conscience, the being pleased with the terrors of another on seeing a cat, where I feel no uneasiness, but, on the contrary, pleasure ? And yet I should be very angry indeed at any one's laughing at my horror, if a rat was near me : Yet so composed are we all at what does not affect ourselves, that it is a lamentable truth to say (and we must all be sensible) that these things are unavoidably so.

That these unfortunate prejudices should be stemmed in their progress, is an indispensable duty and lesson, which, it is true, ought to be inculcated for our own sakes, and the repose of others. That antipathies are dreadful, I think I can warrant,

prove, and explain : For a sword or pistol at my breast I do not think would prove so great an alarm to me, as a rat would in my pocket or bed ; my distress on such an accidental misfortune would be attended, not only with agonizing sensations, but, I verily believe, immediate danger.

To prove that fear is the result of nature, I will observe, that by my living on the banks of the Thames in London for many years, rats were as familiar as kittens to my sight ; nay, more so, for where I saw one cat I must have seen twenty rats, at low water, about the logs of wood, lighters, &c. On a fine day they swarmed, and towards evening it was their grand rendezvous. My mother had the same prejudice. I have heard her mention repeatedly, that when she was near her time with me, one day, when dressed to dine out with company, being near the top of the stairs, a rat passed suddenly between her legs, which alarm caused her immediately to fall from the top to the bottom ; and, instead of visiting, was put to bed extremely ill, and judged to be in imminent danger : Whether that might be the original cause to ground these fears in me, I cannot decide ; but am certain I am so.

To return to my house in Big-Strand-Street, where I left myself fast asleep, and thank God, that sleep continued till within an hour of day-

light; but that hour seemed to me the longest and most painful I had ever experienced, (the fever and blisters on my ankles not forgot); indeed we generally feel our present woes as the worst. I was waked by a lump falling on my breast: My first conjecture was, that a thief was in the room, and had placed his hand there. I then thought, by no more moving, it might be a cat; which reflection was of great comfort and consolation; and next, like Richard the Third, concluded it was but a dream, and possessed heroism sufficient to start myself up in the bed, and, like our stage Harry the Eighth, to cry out *Hough! hough!*—which act of valour was no sooner performed than I was immediately saluted with the squeaking of vermin, and their running up and down the curtains, and over the bed, and under the bed. I, distilled almost to jelly with my fears, lay covered over head and ears, not daring to call for assistance, or feel for the string of the bell, or even to move a limb.—The rats, I am convinced, must have made that room their constant nightly residence, not having been used, I suppose, for above twelve months. On my suddenly calling out and striking the bed, those devils, by such an unexpected alarm of danger, must have been almost as much terrified for their preservation as I was for mine: For had they (as I have been told they will) made an at-

tack, they would soon have conquered me, their petrified foe. What resistance immediate danger might have enabled me to perform I know not ; but as I feel at this moment on the relation, I am certain the bribe must be enormous that could prevail on me to touch a living rat.

When day-light had befriended me, and the gentry had retired to their secret apartments, I found the bell, and courageously rung and called for the servants. At last a lazy dirty figure made his appearance, to whom I related my woeful tale, but did not find it made any impression, or called forth the falling tear of pity for all my nightly sufferings ; and when the dingy Wowski (his wife) made her *entree*, and had heard the particulars from her darling Trudge, they both laughed, and thought it a very good joke ; the dusky lady only uttered, " O ! faith I wish I had been with these varmant cratures ; by my shoul I would have made sport for them by cutting them pace male." However, though it was Sunday, I got the upholsterer, where I had lodged in Abbey-street, to oblige me with a man to take the bed down, and search even the ticken, to see if any rats had taken refuge where a flea might have security or lodging. I had all the apparatus moved into the dining-room, and a large cat from Mrs. Chaigneau's was sent to be as a guard.



All holes and crannies whatever were stopped ; and, as a proof of my politeness to the inhabitants, I never, even at noon-day, entered that fatal chamber without a previous knocking.

This childish story will be condemned by all, except such as unfortunately are liable to such unconquerable aversions ;—nor would I here have inserted it, but from one motive—to engage, as far as possible, some pity and allowance from those who are so happy as not to be liable to such disagreeable sensations, however trifling they may be thought ; for if a dungeon was my lot, my first idea would be the rat-holes.

Some men there are love not a gaping pig,  
Some who are mad when they behold a cat.  
Masterless passions sway us to the mood  
Of what we like or lothe.——

I have frequently heard of a pet cat, but never yet of a pet rat :—I once conquered prejudice so far as to have familiarized myself to a pet squirrel, which certainly bears some resemblance, though it is paying the frolicksome squirrel a shabby compliment. A pet mouse has at times been happily cherished in a lady's pocket, but never so particularly described or authenticated for its friendly and uncommon attachments, as by the

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renowned General Baron Trenck, in his late Prussian Romance, printed within these three years, and universally read.—So now farewell to rats and mice, and such *small deer*,—and I hope for ever. Antipathies are as unconquerable as unanswerable: John Bull loves beef and pudding, the Frenchman soup, the Dutchman butter, the Scotchman haggis, the Irishman potatoes, the Welchman leeks and kid, the Italian macaroni, and a Turk (what we find poison) laudanum.—It would unavoidably occasion inconceivable trouble to invite a guest of every tribe and nation to one table, and possibly contrive the means to provide a favourite dish for every separate visitant's palate; for there are as particular and fixed aversions to our eatables as to different species:—I like cheese, yet the friend at my elbow (perhaps strong in constitution, and naturally robust and spirited) might faint at its being produced on the table. I can aver that cream sauce to a turkey, with all my precaution and determination, to a certainty spoils my dinner:—It is a feast that takes away my stomach.

As I was lately speaking of my Strand-street situation, I will proceed with giving information that the approaching 25th of February seemed to promise being most prosperous, from the exertions of Mr. Chaigneau, Lord Forbes, and my long list of more than common friends; my boxes

were rapidly taken, and, for want of places in that circle, no less than seven rows of the pit were added and railed in at box prices, which are the same as in London; indeed more, as every shilling goes in Ireland as thirteen pence. Mr. Chaigneau paid me forty guineas for tickets: the whole receipt of the house (not then so large as it was made by Mossop after that time) was 154 l. and an overflow from every part of the theatre: Gold tickets to a considerable amount, not only from my friends and some persons of distinction, but particularly from the gentlemen of the army, over whom Mr. Chaigneau's situation as principal agent gave him great sway, and he paid personal visits every where for the purpose of serving me.

Jane Shore has been already stated as the play on this memorable night, but I have omitted the mentioning my own performance at that period: Lord Hastings, I believe, was not much graced or honoured by my assuming his chamberlainship, together with his star and garter, which did not receive from me any additional lustre that could be possibly handed down to his successors with honour. However, I cannot blame my manager for not being well dressed; the wardrobe it is true was not equal to equip a number of persons of fashion fit to appear at court on a royal birthday: But with the manager's consent, and Mr.

Dexter's approbation, I wore Mr. Dexter's grand suit for particular occasions, which was a new blue satin, richly trimmed with silver, looked very elegant, and what was better, fitted me exactly.

Mr. Dexter was the gentleman who appeared at Drury-Lane in 1752 in Oroonoko with more than common expectation of great success, and was in 1758 noted as a leading actor in the heroes and fine gentlemen on Smock-Alley stage. I must say in justice to myself, that I was perfect to the line, if not to the letter, consequently the play went smoothly on, and I obtained applause of course from so numerous a set of friends. Mrs. Fitzhenry, in Alicia, gave (as was usual) great satisfaction, as I did to an extravagant degree when magnificently arrayed for Queen Dollalolla in Tom Thumb, which obtained a continued roar, as I played it as Woffington; and I certainly may be allowed to say, the steadiness and earnestness of the imitation was at least equal to any modern professor's attempt.

The rapid step from my late illness, extreme poverty, and friendless situation, had taken such a turn, that with my coach, table-acquaintance, presents, and great benefit I thought my fortune made, and early in March, with true felt gratitude, not from

that day, week, or month, but never effaced to the present moment, now including above thirty-two years, I took leave of my good friends, in possession of two valuable gifts, health and wealth.—Indeed to the wonderful care of these good and undescribable persons can I only attribute my existence, and also my wealth, as from that time, till encumbered with the cares of my present unpromising and perplexed state, I never knew, in the course of several years, the want of cash; which state of happiness my after frequent visits to Dublin made me, as a young man, in a kind of independence.

Early in life I envied theatrical monarchy, and like most things, when obtained, I soon experienced (like the wisest man) “That all was and is vanity and vexation of spirit;” and as Gay says,

Life's but a jest, and all things shew it :  
I thought so once, but now I know it.

With now 130l. in that pocket, which a very few months before contained only two guineas (and which I *then* termed a treasure)—but good God ! what a change !—like a ten thousand pound prize to a cobbler, the contrast nearly the same,

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only with this difference, the cobbler might have been in health and happy, but I had been ill, very ill, and a poverty-struck youth—I sailed from Ireland with a fair wind, attended by the waft of numberless good wishes for my safe arrival in Old England.

At Chester I met young Mr. Bagnal, (a gentleman of family in Ireland) and as I was become a man of fortune, we travelled post, like gentlemen, and arrived safe in the metropolis. I felt myself in step, air, and mind, a very different person from what I was when I left London.

Soon after my arrival I took leave of Mr. Bagnal, and presented myself with as much duty as pleasure to my dear mother, as every son should and ought to do, and am certain the return was overpaid by her. Her joy, surprise, and a thousand *etceteras* which may be supposed; and only affectionate and good mothers can feel such heavenly sensations: I do not speak from supposition, but can aver that though there *was, is, and ever will be* good parents, yet mine was really sprung from the tree called the *Nonpareil*; and I can with truth boast I possessed one truly praise-worthy quality, and that was, being one of the best sons, not from any merit as a duty from myself due to my mother, but because I loved and revered her worth, and conversed with my *true*

*friend.* And what might be termed coldly that of duty, did not create the ground-work only of my esteem, for all I did sprung solely from self-love, as making her happy was my inclination, pleasure, and delight ; nor do I mean by these protestations to convey merit in any extraordinary degree to myself, for had she not been a sensible and an endearing mother, I doubt whether my good behaviour had been conspicuous beyond mediocrity. The giving to her an account of my riches, and my friends in Ireland was a feast ; and my producing the 130 l. bill was a dazzling sight indeed, though only in black and white letters.

Soon after my arrival I paid a visit to Mr. Garrick, who wished me joy, though not in a joyful manner. I gave him an account of my benefit, &c. and thanked him for his leave of absence. The second Saturday after my being in London, as I had staid in Ireland by permission only, I went to the treasurer's office for my weekly stipend of thirty shillings, as stipulated in my article, but which at that time would only have been twenty shillings, as the season of Lent was not expired.

On my asking for my salary, Mr. Pritchard, first treasurer, and Mr. Wood, sub-treasurer, informed me, that as they had not received any orders from Mr. Garrick or Mr. Lacey, they dared

not pay me, and I could not, as they apprehended, have any right to it, but would inquire what they were to do when they saw either of the managers. I argued my right of payment was undoubtable by my article, but of course was obliged to depart as I came, neither richer nor poorer.

A few days after I met Mr. Garrick in Bridge-street, who, on seeing me, instantly, with upbraiding and severe terms, accosted me for my being so audacious (as he termed it) to call at his office for money. He added, (in a supercilious manner) that I had met with a little accidental success in Ireland, a circumstance that never could happen again; and he had from motives of *charity* obtained me a retreat to secure me from want of bread, and I repaid his kindness with impudent assurance and ingratitude. This sudden attack really alarmed me, as I had still formed great hopes for my future success on Mr. Garrick's power and friendship from what he had so often professed, though not yet put into practice. In my defence I urged, (with the aid of truth) that I had only been absent upon furlow, and by his permission had only continued on the same granted authority, not having presumed to stay in Dublin, though a severe and dangerous illness had intervened; but under the sanction of that grant, and having an article for that and the fol-



lowing year, I esteemed myself much obliged to him. But *inwardly* presuming on my right of article, I could not in word, manner, or obedience, in duty to myself, give up a point I had so far engaged in with that great monarch, but persisted, that on my return to London, and his theatre, I was every way entitled to my salary.

He austere answered, had I returned (as he expected I should) in great distress, his own goodness and feelings would have allowed me the salary; but as I asserted a falsehood, and was not in want, my insolence deserved punishment, for there was not any such agreement subsisting between us. I, all security, and full of open conviction against him, in the face of day not only asserted my right, but hastily produced my bond, which was worded thus on the back, "Articles of agreement between David Garrick and James Lacey, Esquires, and Tate Wilkinson, Gentleman, for two years, from October 24, 1757." Here I concluded myself quite sure, and of course felt as elate as any plaintiff on the gaining a verdict in his favour. When after a look of disdain and a sneer of ineffable contempt, Mr. Garrick said, "Thou foolish pert boy, go home to thy *Mamma*, she can read though you cannot; look carefully over the contents of your article and you will there find, that on the inside it does

not commence till September 1758." I of course had no occasion to ejaculate, "O upright Judge!" but hung down my head and sneaked home to my mother, when to both our astonishments it was really and truly as Mr. Garrick had said. This shews how careful people should be to read every thing before they sign; and never to trust the seeming generosity and good nature of others. The contents of the inside of this great and mighty article did not take place till the September following, 1758. How he could think it worth his notice to treat so insignificant an object, as he termed me some months before, in so mean, so artful, and so ungentlemanlike a manner, I from that time to this could never devise, unless through fear of my talents as an imitator, he held me in a contemptuous light; yet still, ever watchful and careful in regard to himself, he might perhaps think me worth retaining for a trifling salary, as an exotic for his hot-house (for he always used to term me his exotic); therefore he chose to lock me up like a wild beast, to prevent my distracting his repose or his consequence. Thus without salary was I obliged to remain, and have recourse to my philosophy, and sit down contented; but being a man of fortune as I *then* thought myself, I went on a visit to a new spot, the fashionable city of Bath, to drink the waters, having had an

invitation from my friend Mr. Hull. My intimacy with that gentleman and Miss Morrifon, now Mrs. Hull, was fixed from our first acquaintance the summer before at Maidstone ; from that time to the present, I have ever been favoured with their study to oblige and serve me, which I have never yet had it in my power to return according to my wishes. This acknowledgment I offer as a debt of honour; and though not substantial, my gratitude and good opinion could not let slip this opportunity of paying a tributary compliment, to the merit of those particular and worthy friends.

My first appearance at Bath, was on Monday the 8th of May, 1758, for Miss Morrifon's benefit. Othello, Mr. Wilkinfon, from the theatre-royal, Dublin ; also, Mr. Wilkinfon will treat Mr. Foote with a Dish of his own Tea. I was kindly received, Mr. Quin was at the play; the imitations were well received; but from my not being known on the stage, and not having had the sanction of a London audience, the applause was very different from what I had been honoured with in Dublin, and what I afterwards gained at Bath, when I had become more used to the stage by a variety of playing, and the praises and applause of London had wreathed my brow with that all powerful phrase termed *the fashion*: so prevalent

is that word, that even the Siddons and the Jordan bow to its shrine. But a fickle jade is Fashion; and the first actresses that thinks she is secure, will at times find Mrs. Fashion a shallow and inconstant friend.

I gave Tea for Mr. Hull, on Wednesday the 10th of May; and acted Essex (for the first time), with Cadwallader in the farce of the Author, for Miss Ibbott. In the interim, the families of the Townsends and the Hanways in London, were all well-wishers for my mother's and my welfare, and were ever devising ways and means to advance and establish my future success; their tables, when I was in London, were my constant welcome places of resort. While I was figuring away at Bath for my own diversion from May, without any engagement, till September following at Drury-Lane, they were deliberating for my real prosperity much more than I could myself. The Townsends had at that very juncture Major Strobe and his lady, from Portsmouth, at their house on a visit: Major Strobe was the first in command at the Portsmouth garrison; at the same time there were a Mrs. Arnold and Miss Arnolds her daughters, from Portsmouth, also on a visit in London; they were distant relations to the Hanways. My mother who was a frequent and a welcome visitor, and indeed a desirable guest, being at dinner at the

Townsend on a grand gala day, and where the above ladies and gentlemen were present, the good old lady Mrs. Townsend, with her genuine marks of benevolence and kindness, desired a glass round to the health of her young friend and pupil for prayers, Tate Wilkinson, which was of course immediately assented to, and complied with according to her wish. This gave my truly good mother an opportunity to inform the worthy circle, that after all the afflictions and misfortunes that had unremittingly pursued her through life, she was, she thanked the great Being, blessed with a son who made it his study to support her and to bestow every assistance in his power to render her latter days comfortable and easy. They all agreed that being so good a son as my mother had described, I deserved every praise and every encouragement.—Mr. Jonas Hanway confirmed what my mother had related, and they all joined in wishes for my success, and a continuance of regard and duty being paid to her allowed worth. After a short silence, Mrs. Strode broke out in the following exclamation—"Good God! Mr. Hanway, a thought strikes me swift as lightning, whereby we can with pleasure and ease to ourselves be of infinite service to Tate"—My mother of course bowed and gave eager attention, as did every one at the hospitable table. Mrs. Strode

proceeded with observing, it was then a time of war between France and England, May 1758, and we have at Portsmouth, added she, a glorious fleet for the honour of Old England and the terror of France, in consequence of which our little garrison town is full of soldiers and sailors, and all with plenty of money in their pockets, which they cannot bear the thoughts of keeping there—as sailors in particular, are never careful for the morrow;—we have every year at Portsmouth a company of players, who travel also to Plymouth and Exeter: A Mr. Kennedy, an elderly man, is the manager of the company, and he always makes Portsmouth his summer place of residence; the Major, herself, and family, should return there in a few days, and when arrived at home would send for the manager, and then make a point of her friend and old acquaintance Mrs. Wilkinson's son, being engaged for the summer season; she also added, her house should be my ordinary, and from her intimacy with Mrs. Wilkinson, and her friend Mrs. Townsend, she would introduce Tate to all her acquaintance; and flattered herself she could answer that his jaunt to Portsmouth, by her contrivance and management, should be profitable and pleasant, with every reason for his satisfaction, and none to occasion regret. The party assembled added every assurance of pa-

tronage and support to the theatre, and had no apprehensions, that my friends and merit could do so well as in Dublin, but they should prove a sample at Portsmouth, in a comparative view, likewise to boast of. This was no sooner said than done by Mrs. Strode.

All these wonderful and agreeable particulars it may be supposed were by the next post transmitted to me at Bath, with all the joy and heartfelt satisfaction and partiality of a fond mother. I returned on the wing to her in London, and got equipped with what I thought necessary for a young gentleman, not omitting a laced suit of clothes, which in those days were all the fashion, and a rich gold laced Kevenhuller hat; and waited with impatience for my return of the Portsmouth lottery ticket, which proved no blank but a prize: for Mrs. Strode and the Arnolds finished the business they had undertaken; not like that of the law's delay, for on their arrival at home, it was no sooner mentioned than accomplished; as when the theatrical troop arrived, the manager was summoned to attend them, and he was commanded, *not* intreated, under peril of their authority and the severe law in force, to comply with Mrs. Strode's mandate: for that company of players, did not want or approve of interlopers, either to act the characters they possessed, or to give any

encouragement to strangers ; fearing, if they did grant permission, they might lead the inclination of the town into temptation, and create an appetite for the London actors during their vacation : for many London performers at such a critical time, would not have disliked such a pleasant trip (it being only seventy-two miles from the great city) for health and profit—and they would have been refreshed with delightful sea breezes ; and the Londoners, once admitted, would have diminished the fame as well as the profit of the Devonshire and Hampshire candidates of the sock and buskin, who basked in the sunshine of wealth at Plymouth and Portsmouth during *the glorious war*, so called by the poor players, like Mr. Cumberland's Jew, who says, " The plague is a blessed circumstance ; " and both for the same motive—self-interest. It was agreed, I was to have a share (as there was no distinction of emolument from Romeo to the Apothecary, all received an equal portion), likewise a clear benefit whenever I chose to appoint ; and was to act from Friday the 9th of June, 1758, until August the 14th, as often as called upon by the manager. My being represented to him as a gentleman whom a large party of people of fashion were determined to support, and not being sufficiently established as a performer to cause any grounds for jealousy in point of fame, prevented



any opposition from the company to hinder the manager's compliance with the offer proposed for the noviciate; therefore as it conveyed an idea of aiding their interests, and a refusal would have occasioned much displeasure, the preliminaries were agreed to; and Mrs. Strode wrote to Mr. Jonas Hanway an account of her success, and summoned me immediately to Portsmouth. I received a letter of invitation couched in genteel terms from the manager; and on this expected and wished-for intelligence, I set off with eager curiosity for the new scene of pleasure; and what rendered it more enchanting to my youthful mind, was a corroboration of such happy events suddenly springing up and snatching me from the brink of hopeless poverty and despair, and all within the space of seven months; and, as in a dream or enchantment, was known and engaged in not only a polite circle of acquaintance, but welcomed and received with such flattering aspect from every benign and friendly countenance, that a stranger to have entered the room would really have supposed I had been a person of consequence in an enviable circle. Happy, happy minds, that shed such sunshine and genial rays on the sons and daughters of affliction! And as happy are those young ladies and gentlemen who are favoured with such rays from superiors as to make them observant of not

only manners, but of what is really good. Youth of both sexes, when treated so kindly, are too apt to attribute it as a compliment to their own self superiority, instead of truly feeling where the gratitude is justly due. Indeed I have seen so much of supercilious behaviour on granting a favour, and so many instances of affectation and self-sufficiency on receiving, that I truly think and believe it would have been a difficult matter for one possessed of real genius to distinguish on which side lay the greatest absurdity.

I arrived safe at the garrison, but not without inquiries at each gate and drawbridge for my name, and what was my business, as the road from Hillsey Barracks to Portsmouth, is a continued chain of drawbridges, &c. I had not been housed three hours in this well guarded town, when a Capt. Chambers, brother to Sir Charles Chambers, an old friend and intimate of my father's, and well acquainted with Captain James Jones (formerly mentioned), of the Foot-Guards, and a Captain Scott of Chester, with three or four other officers, came, not only to welcome me, but Capt. Chambers, as my late father's friend, in the name of all his brother officers, gave me an invitation to constantly dine and sup with them at their mess: I of course accepted of it, and made a decent acknowledgment for the fa-

your conferred; but my heart felt much more than my tongue could express. In short, from the introduction of the Strodes, the Arnolds, and the officers, (my father having been universally known, and I may add, beloved by the gentlemen of the army), I had such a general acquaintance, that there actually were few houses in Portsmouth but where I was received on the same footing as when in Dublin; and from my universal intimacy, the streets seemed to become a part of my own fancied property.

On Friday, June the 9th, I appeared in *Othello*, which part I had founded, as Mr. *Hitchcock* observes in his history of the Irish Stage, on the manner, &c. I had observed and caught from Mr. Barry; and also gave *Tea*. The theatre was crowded to a degree; and had my performance, been bad instead of tolerable, it would have been attended with applause (the *Tea* of course was received with much approbation): but I was fond of undertaking too much at one time, either to serve my reputation as an actor, or to the preservation of my health as a man, for my constitution was never one of the strongest, being racked at times from my youth to this day with a dreadful bilious complaint; and an irregular life has encouraged that enemy every week to convince me of its pitiless power, which

pushes my feeble steps downward, before my time, from the pinnacle of fifty. I must remark, that as my reception was secure from my friends being present, I should have consulted my own ease, and have had patience to have studied better for my *own* advantage, by giving more satisfaction to the audience and less trouble to myself; but young performers have an idea of striking the observers with their various powers, which is a wrong and dangerous experiment. For instance, it would have been more prudent for me to have acted *Othello* only, as a test of my abilities, and reserved my *Tea* to another night, for the refreshment of my acquaintance.

When I look over and recollect some of the nights-work I have gone through on the stage, to my infinite fatigue, it is wonderful I am existing to relate the particulars; the study, the labour, and the bad hours I have ever kept considered. Indeed at this instant I feel my stomach painful, which makes the observation occur, that perhaps could I provide a better leg in exchange for my broken one, I should not be surprised, if in high spirits the following week, I was to laugh at my own reflections and gravity: So true is Lord Chesterfield's remarks on our courage and our fears, with every other sensation according to our habit of health, custom, and exercise. From the same

thought I imagine, arises the saying ascribed by our soldiers of the Americans, "They did not feel bold on such a day." However from my first stage success, I certainly was bit by a theatrical tarantula, for my appetite for acting was insatiable. Illness (unless very severe) never was a restraint; for if able to crawl out of bed, I have often gone to the theatre much disordered, and if my performance has been received with applause, have returned home recovered and perfectly well: On the contrary, I do not know a more mortifying or disagreeable situation, than to act to a poor house, indisposed in health, and to be only indifferently received; yet these unpleasant circumstances have happened to every performer, from the highest to lowest at particular times—it is the unavoidable lot of human life in all its stages. If an actor or actress be really ill those who are well should lend every assistance in their power on such an emergency to serve the royal till, and preserve the audience in temper. Not any thing sours a congregated assemblage of persons so much as frequent apologies; nay, the manager is often blamed from the pettishness of the audience, because the performer is sick; and I am sorry to say, I believe assistance on such sudden disappointments, is often refused, not so much from ill nature in the disposition of the actor or actress, as fear in the

player, of not being well received by the persons assembled together; and besides yielding to a false pride and fancied self-importance in the one so fixed on, to supply the place of the sick performer, which indeed might often be prevented if the audience would good naturedly support the actor or actresses, who in such a predicament undertakes the part, however inferior his or her situation may be in a theatre; and they may by such kind assistance draw forth sparks of future greatness, which may have been obscured by not having had an opportunity of displaying them, and of receiving the sanction of the public.

But let me, crab-like, get back to Portsmouth, from which place I had not any right to have strayed. But I fancy myself in these remarks and incidents as if I was speaking to some particular friend, and if I cannot obtain great lenity, pray, in compassion to yourself, good reader, as well as to me, close and drop the book; for I neither possess wit or talents, nor profess any such gifts as to furnish me with hopes of entertaining any one as a writer; indeed I never had an idea, or attempted any thing of the kind. So I stand like Hope, wishing patience to be granted to every reader, sprinkled with a few grains of good humour. If any one ask, Why I now take this liberty? I will honestly and frankly own, that con-

infirmity occasioned by a broken limb, has made the year very *tedious, wearisome*, and heavy; therefore I sit and recall past joys and misfortunes to my mind, and as I know they are various, I think they may please both friends and enemies for any hour that may hang heavy on their hands; and though time is allowed as precious, yet the wise people sometimes throw an hour away, not to be bought back again at any price. Next, I value myself on the authenticity of what I relate and pledge my truth and honour, for the whole being a recitation of strict matters of fact only. Mrs. Bellamy averred the same, but she took such pains to be untrue in her accounts, that it could not be the effect of a bad memory, as she hints; but, on the contrary, labour and study to dress things so widely different from what they really were. I would have set her right then, and she mentions it in her sixth volume; but she there acknowledges she is a bad chronologist.

From what I have mentioned of my Portsmouth visit, it may be easily conjectured I was naturally not a little vain of my pleasant situation. I played an extensive list of characters, and it would seem incredible if not accounted for by my long regular study and practice as a lad, when mock-manager. Some I acted with merit, and can truly say, *all* with applause; such is the happiness of

being secure of the good will of superiors, and obtaining a general kind opinion. Nay, am certain at that time, my youth and inexperience gained me such a partiality from the families I was intimately acquainted with, that they really fancied, as I was a favourite among them, that I was clever, where indeed I was not, and when glaringly wrong or imperfect, would readily frame an excuse for me, even against my own conviction of error.

*List of characters at Portsmouth, acted by Mr. Wilkinson, from June 9, till August 14, 1758.*

- |                                  |                            |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Othello, <i>twice.</i>           | * Horatio.                 |
| * Romeo, <i>twice.</i>           | Hastings.                  |
| * Hotspur.                       | Effex.                     |
| * Lord Townly.                   | * Lear, <i>four times.</i> |
| * Richard III. <i>3 times.</i>   | * Hamlet, <i>twice.</i>    |
| * Castalio.                      | Orestes, <i>twice.</i>     |
| * Osmyrn, in the Mourning Bride. |                            |

#### FARCES.

- |                                |                        |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| Cadwallader, <i>six times.</i> | * Petruchio.           |
| * Ld Chalkstone, <i>twice.</i> | Tea, <i>ten times.</i> |

N. B. Those marked with a \* I had not acted before ; but it proves my industry to make myself well used to the stage.

During my residence here, I wished for a nearer view of the Isle of Wight; for it had a



tempting and beautiful effect from Portsmouth ramparts. The Bath company were there at that time, with them I had nearly engaged myself on the late trip to Bath, had not Mrs. Strode's lucky thought intervened, and put a stop to the business, and a fortunate preventative it was. That, and another escape of the same kind some years after, makes it always recur to my mind as the peculiar care of Providence. Indeed the Portsmouth engagement was a lucky golden drop of Madam Fortune's in every respect.

The Bath comedians were induced to the Isle of Wight by the self same bait, that at one time or the other seduces all mankind, that is the love of lucre; and which great ministers, as well as great players ever have in view. The Bath company hearing from the clatter and the din of arms throughout the kingdom, that an encampment of consequence was to be established for the summer, and the ladies of that theatre, short legged and thick-legged, having a predilection in favour of the knapsack, all voted to pack up their tatters and follow the drum to the Isle of Wight. Nor are theatrical ladies singular in that particular; indeed there needs no ghost to inform the world that females of all degrees, to use a common expression, *set their caps at a red coat*.

Their theatrical Bath majesties therefore ordered

L 3

a baggage waggon, well loaded with armour, foils, truncheons, spears, daggers, and all the implements of war were carefully packed up in case of danger, to repel the French in their flat-bottomed boats, as well as to prove to the regiments, how ably the female warriors were prepared to face the enemy. The waggon was intrusted not only with all the theatrical wardrobe, but with all their own private geer, and that seriously speaking was a property of real value, consisting of linen, clothes, jewels, regalia, &c. to represent kings and queens of France and England, Spain, Portugal, &c. also emperours and empresses, that never were or ever will be ; all these treasures and necessaries were safely stowed, not forgetting the bones appertaining to Hamlet, Calista, &c. Their all was intrusted to the protection of a rude boorish Wiltshire waggoner, thunder and lightning not omitted, but left to the care of the stage-keeper, who undertook; and said, "He was perfectly competent from constant practice, to conduct and guide such troublesome and dangerous elements."

Thunder and lightning, attended by a wonderful eclipse, seldom pleases even on the stage, except in the Duke of Buckingham's Rehearsal, where it always raises a laugh instead of a storm. But lo! the *whole* was destroyed by fire the first night of the waggon's journey on Salisbury plain; this is

not more strange than true, Mr. Keasberry, now manager of the Bath theatre, can testify the fact. It was not occasioned by the elements above, nor yet by the stage thunder and lightning, but by the waggoner's inattention, and not endeavouring to save any part of the goods, when the machine had taken fire; and consequently as no water or any assistance was to be had, all the property, to a considerable amount, was consumed.

The distressed and harrassed troops mustered at Newport, where *Queen Ibbot* verified her favourite Shakspeare's words——

“ A clout upon that head

“ Where late a diadem stood.”

They prepared as well as they possibly could to open their small theatre, in the little town of Newport; for, then the players argument was too mournful to admit much talk.

There were four or five regiments; if not more, encamped there; the gentlemen of the army are in general theatrical and generous, and these qualities never were more necessary than after that unfortunate fire. The gentlemen expressed an universal desire to make a compensation for their distress, and indeed it might be reckoned incumbent on them so to have promised and acted, as due to a debt of honour, to make good their losses,

which happened in consequence of their desire to give these gentlemen entertainment, who were so cooped up from their usual round of diversions; and certainly so established a company as those of the Bath theatre, to undertake so hazardous and so long a journey, had a right to expect support and respect. I went to pay my devoirs to them, by taking a boat with only one man to row me across the arm of the sea which separates Hampshire from that charming romantic spot, the Isle of Wight. The afternoon was fine and serene; I stayed with them two days, and was highly satisfied with its rural beauties, but on my return the sea ran very high, and the wind blew a hurricane, which alarmed me so much, that I was really rejoiced when I got into Portsmouth; and was greatly surprised when several gentlemen of the navy told me, it was a very dangerous expedition, and what not one of them would have attempted, except on necessity and duty, but not on any means by way of a frolick.

“As one woe treads upon another’s heels,” as Shakspeare observes, so did another misfortune happen to my good friends Mr. Keasberry and Mr. Griffith; for they had scarcely got their necessary repairs after the dreadful conflagration, when as Mrs. Inchbald’s epilogue expresses, “Down came an order to suspend the ball;” or in plain English,

they had been there but a very short time, when orders came for the whole camp to break up and march for Cowes, and immediately embark on board the shipping prepared for them at St. Helens, and sail on a secret expedition against the French; and as the town of Newport could not without the assistance of the army, provide for, or by any means support the Bath company; so the players packed up their little *all* and sailed for Southampton, and from thence repaired to Reading in Berkshire, where they continued till the season for the usual opening of the Bath theatre.

My benefit at Portsmouth, was on Monday the 24th of July, the Provoked Husband, with Tea, and the part of Cadwallader; nothing under full price, and by desire the gallery and pit all made one price. A great house was of course expected. Indeed that season, I do not remember there was a bad one; therefore no need of the traveller's talent to make it a wonder, that mine was a great one.

But will not the reader stare at such a piece of uncommon luck to happen, and to come on a sudden burst? for the command of the army was conducted so well, and so secretly, that we had not a notion or even a whisper of the kind of any such expectations on the Wednesday;

L 5

but on the Friday and Saturday the town was crowded with officers, &c.—This occasioned a great house on the Saturday July 22, not an usual night of playing; and on Sunday his Royal Highness the Duke of York arrived, and honoured me with his company at the play on the Monday, where he favoured me with much notice; and, as the saying is, the *whole world* was there, all at Wilkinson's benefit. Whoever remembers that expedition planned against Cherbourg will know this account tallies to the day and the hour. The theatre and stage were so crowded, that it was difficult to perform. Part of the regiment of his Majesty's guards, with naval officers, and those of several regiments, and strangers innumerable, with the marines, &c. all combined could easily have filled a London theatre.

The magnificent and powerful fleet, added to every other brilliancy, made the whole a glorious sight; not that any ship pleased me more, however gaudily dressed at Spithead, than our theatrical frigate, so nobly adorned on my benefit night; and to mark my singular good luck, in three days they were all embarked; the wind was fair, and away they sailed, for the glory of Old England.

My *Tea* the night of my benefit was of great

service not only there but was remembered and related as a matter of merit in the *little village* called London.

Colonel Cæsar, of the guards (Mrs. Woffington's defender and protector) was at the play, and saw and felt the force of my imitation of that lady.

I was introduced to several gentlemen, with whom afterwards I was very intimate.—It was at that time my acquaintance first commenced with the late General St. Leger, which continued till the year of his death; he honoured me with being my particularly attached and intimate friend, as all my Yorkshire acquaintance can testify. The last dinner he had at his own house at Park-Hill, I was with him by particular invitation, as also Capt. Smelt, who accompanied him to Dublin, where death snatched away my friend and patron. With the truly accomplished nephew of General St. Leger an intimacy I cannot boast, but can exultingly mention the honour of many favours and acts of kindness—not paid to my own deserts, but by a compliment which originated from his certain knowledge that his uncle, the late General St. Leger, was not only my patron, but honoured me with his friendship.—One of the blessings I long for (during my short remainder of life) is, that I may see that gentleman situated in rank

and affluence equal to the Prince's friend, and his own most sanguine expectations, accompanied with many years to enjoy that prosperity with health, spirits, and increasing happiness; let my situation be what it will, I shall always rejoice at never-fading laurels circling the brows of Colonel St. Leger.

Colonel Thornton, of the Yorkshire Blues, was also on the Cherbourg expedition, and with whom I could boast the honour of continued friendship in London, till I lost him as I did my General, for death sweeps all. Colonel Thornton was one of the most lively tavern-friends I ever knew.

After the combined circumstances of luck at Portsmouth I returned with a full pocket, all elated, to London, not having in the least a contemptible opinion of my own abilities. Success makes people vain, and in truth, without a touch of vanity, "little worthy would be resolved or done."

Without a spice of this said vanity performers would not have courage to sustain the shock and proceed—For at the *best* the stage has its bitters mingled with its sweets, which cannot be known till tasted and experienced, for surely no other profession can be so fickle and precarious: Indeed I know of no comparison compatible, but a



similitude to the most splendid situation in this world, which is the court : For notwithstanding the jump of difference and the seeming impertinence of the assertion, it is certain that the *ins* and *outs* of courts, with many *etceteras*, leave no doubt of the resemblance being striking, strong, and apposite.

My time in London, till the house opened in September 1758, being only three weeks, was very pleasant, and I was chiefly employed in relating my Portsmouth adventures, with a description of guns and drums, and the wonders I had seen performed by the army and navy : I had all the great names as familiar in my mouth as household words. When by reflection my conceit was a little cooled, I waited on my master Garrick once more, in a frock trimmed with gold-lace, which made him dart his eyes through my weak brain. My first words after my salutation were, " Sir, what am I to make my first appearance in, and when ?"—for now I was not so timid and afraid of this lord of lords and ruler of princes, as I was the year before when I acted as his groom, and rode his hobby-horse. He was on this easy question so full of hum—s and ha—s, and hey, why, now, yes, they, now really I think—that finding nothing could come from nothing, I very soon obliged him by retiring, as I was certain he wish-

ed my absence: and having pleased my youthful vanity, by not having presented myself before him in such poverty-struck habilaments as I formerly had done, I may be allowed at that time to pronounce my conduct excuseable, as it was boyish, for I was not nineteen till the 7th of November following.—Indeed he told me that day, as he often had done, that he hated exotics, and I was one:—But in a few days he sent me Prince Volscius in the Rehearsal, which I relished very well, as I thought the run of the verse and the situation would fit in a striking manner for me to exhibit a likeness of Barry, and that I could make it have a sudden and entertaining effect on the audience; but Garrick certainly was in hopes I would return it, as not thinking it of consequence, and afford him an opportunity for anger, which would have kept me at a distance, and prevented my daring to be troublesome.

On the morning the play of the Rehearsal was called, I was convinced the above conjecture of mine was right. “Why, hey, now Wilkinson,” says Garrick—“Hey, now, what, hey—a—I think now that you—Why, Cross—now, now, here, you, you, have sent this part now to this lad; I must not trust him with this Volscius; you know I must have some steady person to depend on—Packer, now, hey, Packer—for if

Wilkinson does it he will be at some of his d—d tricks and be taking off, or some d—d thing or another—Do, Cross, take the part back from Wilkinson, and I will think of something else for him.”

Volscius was of course taken from me, and I retired amidst the sneers and laughter of his Majesty's company of comedians, with Garrick saying to them all, “Did you ever now see such a d——d exotic? he would have destroyed my whole play of the Rehearsal and be d——d to him.”—Here my greatness received a stab, tho' not deservedly, as it must be granted my ambition had not been insolent when contented with Prince Volscius for a first appearance as Mr. *Somebody* on a London stage; and what a falling off was it to have such contempt thrown upon the Portsmouth Roscius!—Indeed I was not ordered to wait in plays as in the preceding season, but was quite unemployed, yet I received my weekly stipend of thirty shillings regularly..

Early in October I met Lord Robert Manners, who was crossing James-street, Covent Garden, and whom I had forgot to mention as one of our party at Park-Gate and Holyhead on my journey the year before to Ireland. In Dublin he was very kind to me, and whenever we met, in the park or in the street, he always stopped or walked with me for eight or ten minutes chat.

When I solicited Lord Harcourt, some few years ago, to intercede with his Majesty for a renewal of my York and Hull patents, I was highly favoured by my fellow traveller, Lord Robert Manners, for the permission he gave me of his name to Lord Harcourt: He saw me twice in his sitting-room below stairs in Grosvenor-square; he declared he could chat, but he could not write; he was a picture of reverence and decay, for he had dignity to the last, but death seemed entirely to have full and fast hold; he assured me he saw no visitors, therefore this permission was the more kind; he complained of excruciating agony, and in a very *short time* after, that worthy, friendly, brave soldier, and nobleman departed this life.

On Lord Robert Manners stopping to speak to me in James-street, after one of our usual chats, he wished my success in London might equal that of Dublin, and we parted; but he had no sooner left me than, as I was pursuing my walk, a strong voice issued from a dining-room window with great vehemence, calling out—"Wilkinson! Wilkinson! Wilkinson!"—I looked round, and soon spied my Master Foote, as he was termed.—His having treated me so very inhumanly during my illness in Ireland, and not having heard he was *then* engaged at Drury-Lane, had determined me, from the time he quitted

Dublin, never to trouble myself as to any future intimacy or acquaintance with him ; but life's chapter of accidents is so various, and hangs by such nice threads, that there is no directing, being directed, or advised for the best. It would certainly have appeared very rude not to have complied with so smiling and earnest a summons, and after ten minutes conversation all my slights and wrongs were forgot and forgiven ; and sure if ever *one* person possessed the talents of pleasing more than another, Mr. Foote was certainly the man. I can aver in all my observations that I never met with his equal. Mr. Garrick, whom I have dined and supped with, was far inferior to him in wit or repartee, as indeed were persons of rank and degree ; for Nature bestows not *all her graces* on the great or the opulent. Mr. Foote was not confined to any particular topic ; he was equal in all ; religion, law, politics, manners of this or any age, and the stage of course. Indeed a polished stranger would find it rare to meet with so many agreeable qualities for the conviviality of any company so combined as in a society with Mr. Foote. This is not the tribute of flattery to his memory, but a piece of justice my own impartiality demands ; for it would be despicable indeed to point out his foibles, and not be ready to attest his good qualities. As a wit he is too well

remembered, and far beyond my abilities to describe. As a blemish to his entertaining and improving qualities I must, as a relater of truth remark, that all these shining talents did not dazzle or answer the eager expectation, unless he himself was the sole object of every directed eye; for if a man of genius (I will suppose a Murphy or a Henderson) had slipt in a good story, or had given any entertaining information, and thereby gained the approbation and merit of the flowing souls, Foote not only immediately felt lessened, but could not easily recover his chagrin and jealousy; and the instant the guest had taken his leave and departed; he could not help expressing himself with great contempt, and asking the person or persons remaining if they had ever heard such d——d nonsense as that man had been uttering? and added expressions of wonder why the hounds at table should be entertained with such absurdity. But, indeed, to give the just picture, I must add, as a true historian—had the company left him in the best humour, those very spirits were only reserved for the exposure of each person's failure or particular manner, and which most people, more or less, have, as a certain appendage tagged to human nature: nor did that happen in a less but even in a stronger degree to himself; for his own peculiarities were more extravagant than any person's.

whose gait, or gesture, or history he might choose to record or divert himself with ; and if not given immediate credit for what he asserted against the absentee, he would vigorously fly to his happy reserve of never-failing fiction, which was veiled under such an appearance of truth, aided by wit, humour, and great vivacity, that he generally made converts, who, from irresistible impulse, obeyed his laughing mandates. It was policy to defer, as long as possible, quitting the room where he was monarch, as it was certain, the instant of any one's exit, without loss of time, to be served up, raw or roasted, to the next comer, and that without mercy, although the person had on the hour of his adieu conferred on Mr. Foote an obligation of the utmost necessary service: This idea cannot be better exemplified than by Mr. Murphy in his excellent and entertaining comedy of *Know your own Mind*. — The speech runs thus :

“ Could not you stay till my back was fairly turn'd ? ”

My trait of Mr. Foote is true ; and I think I may assert, when Mr. Murphy wrote that line, he wrote it as if Foote had at that instant been at his elbow.

Mr. Foote possessed, with all these foibles, mingled excellencies, generosity, and humanity ; but vast.

ostentation was annexed to them. His table was open—he loved company at that table, and if they pronounced his wine had a superior flavour, you could not have drank too much, or could he himself have been gratified till he had produced his claret of the best vintage.

Now Garrick was always on a fidget, eager for attention and adulation, and when he thought himself free and adored, would prattle such stuff as would disgrace a child of eight years old in conversation with its admiring and doting grand-mamma. His hesitation and never giving a direct answer, arose from two causes—affectedness, and a fear of being led into promises which he never meant to perform; and therefore “By—nay—why—now if you will not—why I cannot say—but I may settle that matter, and as I shall see you on Tuesday, why then—Hey! you know that—But Mrs. Garrick is waiting—and you now—I say now—hey—now Tuesday—You will remember Tuesday?”—As to money he seldom when walking the streets had any, therefore could only lament his inability to give to a distressed suppliant; but if greatly touched—“Why Holland,” or any other person that was with him, “Cannot you now advance half-a-crown, and be d—d to you?” which if Holland did, was a very good joke, and for fear of spoiling the jest, he never paid Holland.



again. As to his vulgar vein of humour, which really deserves no other epithet, when I was to perform the part of Bajazet, I shall in time and place take the liberty to relate one strong proof, though I confess I think it too gross to mention, and therefore it requires an apology, and if it falls into a fair lady's hand, I give a long warning, no less than twelve months, and request she will take Sir Clement Flint's advice in the Heiress, and skip over the leaf. I would wish to avoid meanness, abuse, or falsehood, and give an exact and candid trait of Mr. Garrick and Mr. Foote, with their shades; but by no means to obscure their lights and good qualities, and hope I shall prove my words on the examination of the sum total, and that my readers will say, my accounts are given in like a just steward, and with those gentlemen and myself, the reckoning shall be fairly balanced.

I must beg pardon, for having left Mr. Foote so long a time waiting in his dining-room in James-street; he eagerly repeated his astonishment at not having seen or ever heard from me, he was quite anxious to know what I had been doing since he last saw me in Ireland, and what and when I was to appear at Drury-Lane? not having a doubt of my success, let the character be what it would! He had the repeated pleasure of

meeting with his friend Colonel Thornton, since his return from the late expedition against Cherbourg, who told him, that he was acquainted with me at Portsmouth, and had been much entertained with my performances at that theatre. Mr. Foote insisted on my staying dinner, which invitation I could not refuse; after dinner, and while the glass was circulating, he intimated a wish I would make my first appearance at Drury-Lane, as his pupil, in a farce he had newly furbished up, and titled the *Diversions of the Morning*; and added, "You must Wilkinson plainly see and be convinced that dirty hound Garrick, does not mean to do you any service or wish you success; but on the contrary he is a secret enemy, and if he can prevent your doing well be assured he will. - I know his heart so well, that if you give me permission to ask for your first attempt on his stage, and to be in my piece, the hound will refuse the moment I mention it; and though his little soul would rejoice to act Richard III. in the *Dog Days*, before the hottest kitchen fire for a sop in the pan; yet I know his mean soul so perfectly, that if on his refusal, I with a grave face tell him, I have his figure exactly made and dressed as a puppet in my closet, ready for public admiration; the fellow will not only consent to your acting, but *what is more* extraordinary, his abject fears will

"Lend me money, if I should say I want it." This I must own seems a severe picture, but the traits are from the life, and a true delineation of character; from which a person who had not been acquainted with Mr. Garrick, might be led to suppose he was a weak man, but it was far from being really the case; for his understanding and quickness of comprehension with fire and vivacity, were infinite; yet at repartee, Foote having the advantage, he sunk in comparison; but his real penetration far exceeded Mr. Foote's; and his great caution had brought on the "Hey—now—what," &c.

But reader, I shall be in a better humour with him by and bye, and he with me, where of course I shall think he appears to more advantage; however that bask of sunshine did not last, but changed like April, and was inconstant as the wind. Foote never was in awe of Garrick, but ever treated him with the most cutting satire, and well knew the way to profit from Garrick, was by always acting on his fears. Mr. Murphy used frequently to treat Garrick in the same manner, if he expected to obtain justice, when connected on matters of theatrical business; and indeed Mr. Murphy continued a teaser to the Roscius till the year of his death, whenever he met him in company. If I have uttered a falsehood, I beg Mr.

Murphy will correct me, whom I have not seen since February 1778, at which time he conferred an obligation, and related a whimsical story of their meeting in a mixed company, where Mrs. Garrick and Miss Moore, the authoress, were of the party. However strange it may appear, tho' Garrick made avarice his idol; yet fear was so predominant to preserve his fame, so all alive, that his own shadow, if he thought it obscured his greatness, would be sufficient to alarm and disturb his night's repose.

With very little thought I assented to Mr. Foote's proposal, which I just now mentioned, of playing in his farce; and verily believe if I had not, that I never should have had an opportunity of appearing on Drury-Lane stage, unless in some part totally unfit for me, when Mr. Garrick would have said and published he had really out of charity done all he could to serve me, but found it was impossible to make any thing to the purpose of such a blockhead; I should then have been discarded, and what would have been more fatal, Pope Garrick's denouncing damnation would of course have rendered all my struggling for fame in vain; for as Sancho says, "*Give a dog an ill name and hang him.*"

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.





M/1/-





m/1/-

